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["BE A WOMAN, MISS ELSWORTH!" HE SAID. "RAISE YOUR EYES. READ THAT!"]

## THE HEARTS OF THREE GOOD WOMEN.

BY PIERRE LECLERCQ.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

"THE TIME HAS COME."

MISS WITCHWOOD arrived at Tom's apartments between five and six in the evening. Doctor Pask met her in the passage of the house and ushered her into the front parlour. He thanked her for coming, apologised for Mr. Sheene's absence, and told her the cause of it, and of Tom's intention of calling at Pondcourt House in the hope of finding that she had not started.

"Why should Mr. Sheene wish to stop me?" she asked, in the whisper that a kind-hearted person involuntarily uses when in the same house with an invalid. "Am I—too late?"

"On the contrary," returned the doctor. "Mr. Sheene's brotherly friendship for Mr. Overseide

has led him to take a hopeless view of the case—I have at last convinced him, a false view. There is now no cause for alarm, hence Mr. Sheene's anxiety to relieve your mind, and save you a long and unnecessary journey.

"He is very kind," she said, in the whisper again. "It is no trouble. You have no doubt, in your own mind, that Mr. Overseide will recover?"

"None whatever, madam. The fever is now passing into its last stage. I may almost say that my patient has commenced his journey to convalescence. He has had every care."

Miss Witchwood said, simply:

"I am so glad," and then followed the doctor into Godrey's room.

He was unconscious. She was considerably pained by the alteration that Annie's death and his own severe illness had made in his appearance. As they entered the room she heard him faintly muttering. She distinguished her own name quite plainly, and smiled a little sadly when she heard him speak it.

Her visit was not without some value, inasmuch as she suggested to Dr. Pask several little arrangements which were calculated to be of benefit to his patient. He wondered that he had overlooked them, and resolved to follow her suggestions.

There was a slight draught coming from the window, which she remedied herself at once. The bed-pillow was not quite high enough, she thought, and so on; and she begged Dr. Pask to see that Mr. Overseide had every delicacy in the way of nourishment that could further his recovery, and to allow her to defray the expenses unknown to the sufferers.

She stayed there about half an hour, and then, assured that Godrey was in good hands, and on the fair road towards recovery, pressed Dr. Pask's hand warmly, begged him to ask Mr. Sheene to report Godrey's progress to her in a day or two, and left the house, returning by the last train to Pondcourt.

Miss Witchwood would certainly not have taken that journey to London but for Tom Sheene's misrepresentation of Godrey's condition. She had believed him to be dying, whereas she had found that he was recovering. It was an agreeable surprise to her, it is true, yet, in a way, she regretted that Mr. Sheene's brotherly friendship for Mr. Overseide (which she did not for a moment question) should have led her to unnecessarily absent herself from her niece for a whole day.

Miss Elsworth's calmness was not to be relied on. Miss Witchwood had, since Godrey's departure, anticipated every day the return of madness



to her niece. Fearing that a more serious fit of insanity might seize her during her aunt's absence on a journey for which there had been really no occasion, Miss Witchwood was excessively anxious to find herself at home again.

There was another reflection to distress Miss Witchwood during her journey to Pondcourt. She had kept her niece in complete ignorance of Godfrey's illness, and had told her that her errand in London was simply one of business. The distressing reflection was then that Mr. Sheene (unless promptly warned by Mrs. Barrycourt) would, in accounting for his appearance at Pondcourt House, naturally divulge to Eve what it was so important to conceal from her, namely, Godfrey's severe fever, and possibly the sad cause of it—Miss Sheene's death. Miss Witchwood dared not imagine the consequences of her niece's learning such news suddenly.

We must now follow Mr. Sheene.

Just as Mrs. Barrycourt and Eve were about to sit down to dinner, he presented himself, with a firm intention of guiding himself by circumstances, at the door of Pondcourt House. He was apparently much surprised and disappointed when the servant told him that her mistress was in London. He "would like to speak a few words to Mrs. Barrycourt," to which end he handed his card to the servant, who showed him into the drawing-room.

Very much flurried by his unexpected visit, Mrs. Barrycourt went to him there. He told her briefly that there was a marked improvement in Mr. Overside's health, that as he (Tom) had business to transact at E—, he thought it better to run over to Pondcourt, relieve Miss Witchwood's mind of its kind anxiety on Mr. Overside's account, and stop her taking the journey she had so generously contemplated. He regretted that he had come too late.

Mrs. Barrycourt thanked him very warmly, and begged him to take dinner with them. He refused. He feared he was intruding. Not at all. Eventually he accepted.

"Miss Witchwood would never forgive me if I were to let you run away so soon, Mr. Sheene," said Mrs. Barrycourt, "after the great trouble you have taken for her. It's most kind and thoughtful. I'm so pleased to hear so good an account of our Mr. Overside, too, though you must please not to mention anything about his illness, or your poor sister's death, before Miss Elworth, who is far from well. The least thing preys upon her nerves, poor dear; Miss Witchwood was obliged to tell her that she was going to London on a little matter of business with her lawyers, and—I really think, if you wouldn't mind, that it would be better if you were to—"

"Account for my unexpected visit," interrupted Mr. Sheene, "by saying that it is connected with that business. Exactly, ma'am!"

"Just so!" ejaculated Mrs. Barrycourt. And they proceeded to the dining-room forthwith.

Eve was, in her calm way, much surprised at seeing Mr. Sheene, who immediately explained the cause of his presence there in the manner that had been agreed on, but explained it very awkwardly.

This awkwardness was intentional on his part, and indeed, his entire demeanour during the dinner was purposely that of a man who was trying to be entertaining at a tremendous sacrifice to his own feelings.

Mrs. Barrycourt was not quick-sighted in such matters, but Miss Elworth noticed that he was far from being at his ease, which was just the impression he wanted to give.

Directly the dessert was placed upon the table, Tom Sheene opened a conversation, which was likely to lead to Mrs. Barrycourt's absence from the room, namely—the investment which he had recommended in the interests of the Bombay grandson.

Mrs. Barrycourt said that she had followed Mr. Sheene's advice, under Miss Witchwood's direction, in all particulars—that she had all the documents and correspondence bearing on the matter safely lodged in her desk up-stairs. Would he like to see them?

His heart, despite of all his effort, beat high, as Mrs. Barrycourt asked the question, for he knew that his answer would secure her absence from the room, and that her absence was the opportunity for his taking the first great step in his audacious scheme.

"Yes," he said; "I should like to look over them. It would be gratifying to you to know that everything is in order. Are the papers get-at-able easily?"

Not exactly. They were not all together. She had not arranged them yet. She was not a woman of business. Perhaps she had made some ridiculous mistake in the investment which would mar her grandson's interests.

At which last agonising thought, Mrs. Barrycourt became very much flurried again.

"Now, take my advice, ma'am," said Mr. Sheene, with seeming good-nature, "and pray be calm. It is just possible that you have omitted some detail of importance, which I may be able to put right for you. From your account of the affair, I am rather inclined to believe that you have, but pray be calm."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Barrycourt, turning rather pale. "Shall I send a servant for my desk?"

"Oh, dear, no!" answered Tom. "There's no hurry. I shall not be bound to start for more than half an hour."

He rose from his chair, and held out his hand to Mrs. Barrycourt, who took it, and regarded him very earnestly, with an extremely vacant expression upon her abstracted features.

"Now," said he, playfully, "just you go and set your mind at rest, by calmly and quietly looking over the contents of your desk, up-stairs, and bringing me every scrap of paper concerning this wonderful affair that you can find. Pray don't miss one, Mrs. Barrycourt, and pray don't alarm or hurry yourself."

"If you will be so kind as to excuse me then, Mr. Sheene," she said, leaving her chair, "I think it would be best."

"Undoubtedly!" said Tom. "And, of course, I will excuse you."

Laughing, he opened the dining-room door for her, and, looking at his watch, said, merrily: "We'll give you twenty minutes, Mrs. Barrycourt."

"I'm sure I shall be a long while hunting them up, Mr. Sheene."

"Twenty minutes, ma'am," he laughed, "is the full extent of the time that we can exist without you. Pray be calm. Pray don't hurry yourself."

"You're really very good," she said. "Eve, my dear—with you directly!"

And with that she left the dining-room, and preceded up-stairs to her bedroom and untidy writing-desk.

Tom Sheene closed the door with a loud bang.

Miss Elworth, who was seated at the table, started, and turned her face towards him. She saw instantly that his levity had been assumed—that his awkwardness during the first part of the evening had been caused by the presence of Mrs. Barrycourt.

There was a terrible earnestness in the expression of his face, which frightened her, and reminded her very forcibly of the hideous face which had haunted her seven times—the face she had sketched—the face which had appeared to her during the third drawing lesson.

The time had come.

The private interview with Eve was obtained at last.

He boldly commenced the first great steps towards the "glittering pounds," by speaking her name in an intensely earnest whisper.

"Miss Elworth!"

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A DEEP-LAID SCHEME.

Eve started from her chair when Tom Sheene pronounced her name so solemnly. He signed to her to reseat herself, and fixed his eyes so

earnestly on hers, that she, who was very subject to that kind of strange fascination, could not withdraw her gaze, although she wished.

"Miss Elworth," he repeated in a low, hurried, anxious tone, "every moment of Miss Barrycourt's absence is vitally precious. Every word I speak is of extreme importance to you. You must have noticed how eager I was that she should leave the room. Don't question my motives—they are honourable. I only desire your happiness, otherwise I am not personally concerned in this. Have I alarmed you too seriously, or are you able to understand what I am saying?"

"I understand your words," she said, vacantly, "but I do not know where they lead to. Tell me! Mystery terrifies me. Tell me!"

"They lead," he answered, quickly, "not so much to what I said I desired just now, as to the happiness of your aunt—to the happiness of Mr. Overside. Which is the dearer to you? Yours or theirs?"

"Their happiness is my happiness," she exclaimed, involuntarily.

"I know it!" he ejaculated, excitedly. "Answer me this. If you were a block to their happiness, what would you do?"

The spell of his eyes, the mystery of his words, and the peremptoriness of his manner would not permit her to answer as she otherwise would. His whole mind exercised its superiority over her poor feeble brain. She was almost forced by its invisible power to do its bidding.

"Remove the block," she answered in a whisper of intensity: "kill myself!"

"No! not that! not sin!" he said. "But remove the block—yes!"

Still under the spell of his eyes, she left her chair, and standing by it, placed one hand on its back; with the other hand she toyed nervously and unconsciously with the ends of her golden hair.

"Miss Elworth, you are living here, to the destruction of the happiness of your aunt and Godfrey Overside. Your youth, your ingenuousness, and your sad affliction have been played upon—you have been treated as a child—your life is unreal—a gross deception has been practised on you. The man and woman for whom you have the greatest affection are, out of compassion for you, sacrificing their own earthly happiness in order to spare you pain!"

It was a skillful, devilish speech. Her eyes flashed, but not with the fire of insanity—her lips quivered—an electric spark seemed to travel through her frame. With the fair hand that had toyed with her hair, now tightly clenched, she struck her little bosom proudly, whispering, as she gave the blow:

"Compassion!"

"Yes!" he said, seeing that he had gained already a great advantage. "Compassion for your madness, for your unrequited love of Overside."

She started wildly when he uttered those last words, and a faint cry half burst from her. She covered her face with her hands, and shuddered.

"Aunt," she whispered, "dearest! awaken me from this strange, miserable dream."

"See, Miss Elworth, how well informed I am!" he said. "You can doubt nothing that I tell you. I know all that concerns them and you. Your encounter with the idiot beggar when he tried to force a paper on you—your flight from him back to the house—your rushing into the library and telling your secret, your love."

He took her hands and removed them from her ghastly pale face. Godfrey's delicious ravings, interpreted with such demoniac cleverness, assisted him again.

"Listen to this beginning of the gross deception that has been put on," he whispered, fiercely. "In the library that afternoon you were labouring under one of your pitiful delusions. You did not tell your aunt that you loved Mr. Overside—"

"Oh! Heaven!"

"Miss Elworth, you told your love to Mr. Overside himself!"

"No! no! A lie—a dreadful lie to madden



me!" she said, wildly staring round the room. Her eyes encountered Sheene's.

"Swear, by the love you bear them," she whispered, glancing for a moment over his shoulder at the door, and half expecting to see some avenger standing there, for he had almost shattered his own nerves in his villainous attempt to mould her mind into the form he wished. "Swear, by the love you bear them, to observe secrecy on what has and will pass between us to-night—to account for any ill effects which my words may cause on you, by saying that you have been suffering from a mad delusion. Promise! and I will tell you more—will tell you all, and show you how you can restore the happiness that you have unconsciously blighted. Promise!"

He seized her cold little hand again, but she snatched it violently from him, sank into a chair, and hid her face again.

"I promise! This has all happened before in one of my fits," she murmured. "I know what you are going to say. I know what I am going to answer. Go on! Go on! I promise. Tell me all!"

He placed himself behind her chair, and placing his hand upon the back of it, bent his head over her shoulder so that his lips nearly touched her ear.

"Godfrey Overside does not love you—you know it," he whispered. "Godfrey Overside does not love my sister, nor is he engaged to marry her. My sister is dead!"

She repeated his last word hoarsely. He quickly snatched from his coat pocket a newspaper which in its account of the railway accident had devoted a few lines to Annie's death. "Be a woman, Miss Elworth!" he said. "Raise your eyes. Read that!"

As if she were acting in her sleep, she obeyed him, and read the paragraph which his finger indicated. Then she let the paper fall, and hid her face from him again. But for the tears which trickled through her fair fingers she might have been dead—she was so calm now.

"You cannot realise the misery that you have inflicted on Overside and Miss Witchwood. He never cared for my sister—it was simply a lie invented to pacify you. Do you know where he is now? No! In all probability he is dead. An awful fever seized upon him directly you drove him from here and happiness. Do you know where your aunt has been? No! On business with her lawyers, she said, I believe. That is another lie invented out of pity for you. Your aunt has gone to London to see Overside, perhaps for the last time on earth!" He stopped for a few moments and watched from behind her the effect of this boldly spoken statement. The calmness was leaving her again, he saw, and passionate excitement was taking its place. Her bosom began to heave at first slowly, then gradually more quickly—her breathing grew more distinct until it became panting, and then with a wild bound she leapt from her chair, and confronted him, almost defiantly.

"Prove your words!" she exclaimed. "Show me that I have been so deceived, and then tell me what you mean by saying that I am the cause of misery to them both. For God's sake, do not deceive me yourself. Let me know the pure truth. I am going mad—I feel it creeping over me. Don't let me lose my senses for ever, before I learn the truth!"

She clasped her head with both hands.

"Give me some water!" she said. "Give me some water!"

He held a glass of water to her lips, and went on speaking while she drank.

"Remember this, Miss Elworth. When you are convinced that your presence here is a blight upon their mutual happiness no more communicate with me. I will befriend you when you are ready to return some portion of what you owe to your aunt, and to prove what you can do for love. You are calmer now. There is my address. Write to me there. Keep it secretly and carefully. Now give me your hand!"

She obeyed him.

"What are you going to do when you learn that what I have been telling you is true?" he asked.

"I am going to remove the block. I am going to kill myself!"

"Grateful girl! And the aunt you love so dearly, too? Could she exist, do you think, with the knowledge that you were dead? Your death would be a greater blight upon her happiness than your presence here. Trust in me! I will manage all without the aid of death. One word before I convince you. Will you write secretly to me when you have made up your mind to bring about their happiness by leaving Pondcourt House? Yes or no?"

Poor mad Eve. She answered, "Yes!"

"Good," he ejaculated. "Now for the proof of Overside's fever and Miss Witchwood's visit to him. Read that letter—quick!"

He gave her the second letter that Miss Witchwood had written him. She read it and returned it to him. The appearance of her face staggered him, for there was positively no expression upon it, and yet the tears coursed silently down her cheeks.

"Well?" she said, vacantly.

"Are you satisfied now that you have been kept in the dark?" he whispered.

"Yes!" she said, with no sign of emotion of any description.

"Can you understand what I am saying now, Miss Elworth?"

"Perfectly. There is something that I want explained—something to bind all that you have been telling me, or all that I fancy you have been telling me, together. What is it?"

"This," he answered. "Do you know what love is?"

"Yes."

"Now do you understand why you have been deceived—why you stand as an impenetrable barrier before their mutual happiness?"

"No!"

"You have sworn secrecy, remember! Overside loves Miss Witchwood!"

Still there was no outwardly visible emotion—still no expression of her fair face.

"Well, go on!" in a hollow whisper.

"Miss Witchwood returns his love!"

No sigh, sob, nor shriek escaped her. She fell as though stricken suddenly by the hand of God, forward on to the floor.

The thought came to Sheene instantly that he had killed her. He leapt over her utterly senseless body, and made at once for the door. Mrs. Barrycourt opened it.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### A STRANGE CHANGE.

TOM SHEENE, at poor Mrs. Barrycourt's request, took Miss Elworth from the floor and carried her to the whilom library (now her bed-chamber), where he laid her upon a sofa and explained to Mrs. Barrycourt all that he pretended to know of the affair.

This was his account. Miss Elworth had, directly Mrs. Barrycourt left the dining-room, spoken with him on very trifling matters in a strangely excited and hysterical way, which had gradually increased until her words had become incomprehensible.

Knowing that Miss Elworth was in delicate health he had been about to summon Mrs. Barrycourt's return when Miss Elworth had given a half shriek, risen from her chair, staggered and fallen where Mrs. Barrycourt had found her. That was all.

A faint tinge of pink coloured Eve's pale face soon after she was placed upon the sofa, and attended to by Mrs. Barrycourt and the servants.

One of the servants—for Mrs. Barrycourt was too confused to deliver herself of any useful idea—suggested that in Miss Witchwood's unfortunate absence it would be well to call in the aid of the Pondcourt doctor, and Mr. Sheene, being assured that he could be of no further use, kindly promised to send the doctor to them, since the doctor's residence was within a few yards of the railway station.

Expressing the depths of his sorrow at the unfortunate occurrence, Sheene departed, de-

spatched the doctor to Pondcourt House, and returned to London, well satisfied with the success of the first great step in his deep-laid scheme.

Eve was apparently somewhat better by the time that her aunt arrived home, but neither speech nor sense returned to her, despite of all the kind efforts that were made to restore them, until the following morning.

The effects of the sudden attack of the previous night were increased weakness, and if possible increased outward tranquillity. Those were the only effects evident to the Pondcourt doctor.

Miss Witchwood's love-quick eye detected another effect—a considerable alteration in Eve's bearing towards her. It was as affectionate as ever, but it was more like the passionate affection that one woman bears another than, as hitherto, the child-like love of a daughter.

She questioned her niece. No, she had nothing to say—nothing had happened. Had Mr. Sheene excited her in any manner? No, she could not account for the fit which had seized her—it had come upon her suddenly, as all the other fits and delusions had always come.

"Would you not like to leave Pondcourt House for a time, dear," Miss Witchwood asked, "to go on the Continent with Mrs. Barrycourt and me? Do you not think yourself that it would benefit you?"

"Yes, but not yet, dearest; not for a week or two. I shall be strong again soon. I know myself much better than the Pondcourt doctor or the London doctors know me, and I am sure that I shall be strong again soon. I hate the doctors. Don't urge me yet to leave her, dearest—pray do not. I am happier and better here."

And from that time strength gradually returned to her until in less than a week after Sheene's visit both Miss Witchwood and the Pondcourt doctor declared that they had positively never seen her so well.

She moved about less like a spirit—there was more life in her face, more firmness in her manner, more strength in her limbs. Yet with all this bodily improvement to rejoice over, there was much about her which mystified Miss Witchwood.

As Eve's health improved, Eve herself became more and more silent. She never started a conversation, but simply answered as briefly as possible any questions which were put to her. Her silence seemed to her aunt, who watched her very closely, to be the silence of a person engaged in most profound, absorbing thought. It was impossible to fathom her.

On one or two occasions Miss Witchwood tried, but on each occasion in vain, and on each occasion Miss Elworth baffled inquiry in the same way, namely, by kissing her aunt without answering a word and going to her own room instantly afterwards and locking herself in for an hour or two.

To attempt to describe the state of Miss Elworth's mind would be to attempt an impossibility. It was a chaos formed of regrets, longings, fancies, perverted facts, and wild delusions.

In her own room she pondered gloomily over her strange interview with Sheene. She remembered and repeated to herself night after night every word that he had spoken on that occasion. She believed him implicitly—believed that he would keep his promise—if she wished it and assisted him—and bring about the happiness of Godfrey and Miss Witchwood without bringing about her own death.

She did not want to die. She wanted to live in order that she might hear of their mutual happiness. She could bear never to see him again, she thought, because Mr. Sheene had said that parting from her aunt for ever was making her aunt always happy. She did not want to look on Godfrey's face again—not now that she knew it was to him that she had confessed her love.

There was one of the strongest incentives to flight. She wanted to hide herself from Godfrey—from the world. Sheene would conceal her; Sheene would bring her tidings of their happiness.

She was silent and strange to her aunt, because she feared her aunt would learn her secret and make her stop—make her again an object of pity for whom sacrifices were to be made, instead of what she wanted to make herself—a being who could sacrifice herself for the sakes of love and gratitude.

"I will wait till I am a little stronger," she said to herself, "and then I will glide from here into the mysterious darkness that Mr. Sheene has ready, so that the light may fall on my Godfrey and my aunt. What wonder that he should love her who is so perfect, or that she should love him. What happiness they have sacrificed for me! What happiness will be theirs when I change their pity for me into admiration!"

(To be continued.)

## A NEW PLAN TO ATTAIN THE NORTH POLE.

A CANADIAN engineer, Mr. Okill Stuart, has devised a plan of approach to the North Pole by means of a chain of sled-huts from Chesterfield Inlet, which is 1,565 miles from the pole. After pointing out that from Chesterfield Inlet to the north end of Lake Winnipeg, where supplies could be delivered by boat, is but 600 miles, he says:—"This distance I would overcome permanently by building a system of relay stations twenty miles apart and connected by a through telegraph line to Winnipeg City at a cost of 120,000 dollars. This work would be carried out by government and would eventually pay, connecting, as it would, Churchill Harbour, mouth of Nelson River, and west coast of Hudson Bay, where, in the future, will be the great emporium of the north, thus neutralising this expenditure by the great advantage of a telegraph system for the purposes of emigration and trade. These relay stations of block huts would be stored with all necessary supplies for the undertaking, together with sleigh, dogs, and men in charge, for purposes of transportation from Lake Winnipeg to Chesterfield Inlet, which latter place would be the headquarters of the expedition, in daily communication with the outer world. To each hut one practical engineer, one doctor, and four able-bodied men, all thoroughbred Canadians; thus ten would comprise sixty men. These would advance in order at intervals, all keeping the due north course, and any deviation would be reported by a halt from the advance hut. All the huts would be advanced in order until a complete chain of communication was established. In this manner I would expect to overcome the whole distance from Chesterfield Inlet to the Pole by the 1st of July, 1884, that being the season for observations at the Pole. The whole cost of the expedition in this way, not including the telegraph line to Winnipeg City, would be about 70,000 dollars.

## IRON SHUTTERS CONDEMNED.

DURING an examination, consequent upon a recent disastrous fire in America, of Mr. Esterbrook, Superintendent of Buildings, by the coroner's jury impanelled to fix the responsibility for the loss of life, he said that there ought not to be an iron shutter permitted on any building in the city. He stated that the effect of iron shutters was to confine a fire inside a building, preventing the firemen from gaining access thereto, until it became a raging furnace within, resulting in a fire that could not be controlled. This is also the experience of all veteran firemen, and they are unanimously of the opinion that iron shutters have caused greater losses than they ever prevented.

THEY WON'T DO IT.—In America, one seldom sees a lady and gentleman walking arm-in-arm in the daytime. Why is it that American damsels are so shy of clinging to a gentleman's arm? Probably it arises from their naturally self-reliant and independent nature. American girls do things which would shock the sensibilities of their European sisters.

# POWER AND POVERTY.

A NEW NOVEL.

(BY OWEN LANDOR.)

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

DAVID GRAY SPEAKS HIS MIND.

Will people laugh to scorn my simple plan  
For waking in the obdurate breast some spark  
Of true understanding?

"HERE'S four whole days and nothing from Murch," said Ben Tomkins to himself, as he sat disconsolately at the back of his shop, his favourite seat when his meditations were none of the pleasantest; "not a word or a line but one from him since he set foot in that outlandish place. What's become of him?"

Ben ruminated for a few minutes, and out of the depths of his somewhat sluggish intellect evolved a feeble idea.

"There's a conspiracy against all of us," he muttered, "just like the story I once read in a book about a man who murdered a whole family with friends and relations, one by one. Jenny's gone, Murch is gone, Mrs. Murch will go next, and then it will come to my turn. The sooner the better—for what is life without Jenny? Waxy taters and withered greens—nothing more."

It was a quiet day in a business sense, although there was plenty of life and bustle in the New Cut, and Ben resolved to desert the shop and go up to see Mrs. Murch. So he told the foreman that he was going out for half an hour, and set his face towards Johnson Street.

Mrs. Murch was at home, and in tears. She had, in fact, been crying at intervals through the day, for she, too, was getting apprehensive about her lord. For four days she had heard nothing of the wanderer, who, in her mind's eye, was already sacrificed to the vain search for Jenny.

"I'm downright glad to see you, Ben, that I am," she said, "for I've got that low-spirited I'm scarcely fit to be left alone. You've not brought any news of Job?"

"Not a bit," said Ben, shaking his head dismally. "But I think he's all right."

"And what makes you think that?" asked Mrs. Murch.

"Well, I think so—because—I've in my head—a something—bordering on conviction—Mrs. Murch—"

"If you only think it, there's nothing in it. Your thoughts were never up to much."

"That's true," said Ben, "I'm a man of action, I am. I can get up at four in the morning and rattle off to market, and work about all day and not feel it. But set me down two minutes to think, and I'm floored—like a front skittle."

"What is to be done, Ben?" said Mrs. Murch, after a few more tears had fallen from her eyes. "Job never ought to have gone alone. Why didn't you go with him?"

"I wanted to go," Ben replied, "and said as much, but Murch, in giving me an answer, wasn't—ahem!—what a man might call pressing. And don't forget, ma'am, that he said we was to wait a week."

"A week!" exclaimed Mrs. Murch, impatiently. "I'll not wait a week. He could have sent me a letter, if it was only an envelope, so that I got it yesterday, if all had been well with him."

"What did he say in his first letter?"

"Not much, as you may reckon—Job's a reader, if anything, and not a writer. He said he'd got there, and had put up at an inn, the name of which I can't make out. There's the letter. Can you tell me what it is?"

The letter was a masterpiece of incomprehensible writing, and Murch, in spelling the words "Lucky Find," had, in his anxiety to make the name clear, so twisted and turned the letters about that they presented the appearance of a plan for a tea-garden maze.

"It looks to me like the Stag's Head," said Ben, boldly making a guess at something characteristic of Exmoor.

"The Sheep's Head, you dunce," said Mrs. Murch, snatching the letter away. "There's only one man can help us at this pinch, and that's Mr. Gray. I'll go up to the office and see him."

"You go, ma'am, to Mr. Cranbury's office?"

"Yes—why not? I'm not afraid of Mr. Cranbury, and if he says anything to me he'll get as good as he sends. Give me my shawl, and while I'm gone you keep house. And mind this, if I find the kettle a boiling when I come back you won't hear no hard words from me."

"All right, ma'am," Ben replied, "I'll have tea ready, being used to help myself, owing to being single. Oh! that I was married, and all this trouble over."

"Perhaps you will be before long," said Mrs. Murch, softening, "anyhow, it will soon put some of us to rest unless we find poor Peggy."

And with her eyes fast filling the good woman hurried out to stop another outburst of weeping. Ben, to distract his thoughts, went in for a little house work—clearing up and dusting prior to preparing tea.

Mr. Cranbury was not at the office that day, and of late he was often absent. Sometimes he did not come until late, and sometimes he went away early; occasionally he did not come at all. He was being worn away by contending thoughts which led him alternately to hope or to despair.

The news of Jack's death had come upon him with tremendous force, and for a time he was prostrated, but he would slowly have come out of his great grief if there had been no after hope to disturb him.

For a hope he had often with him. Sometimes in the night he would hear Jack's voice in his sleep, and becoming suddenly awake fancy he heard it again.

Then he would strike a light, get up, and go all over the house in search of him. He would even throw up the windows and call aloud for him, his voice echoing dismally about the grounds.

Of course there was no answer, but he would return to his couch with hope.

"My Jack will come again," he would mutter as he fell asleep.

A few hours later he would take another view of the matter, and see in the hearing of this voice only a warning that his own time was at hand, and if let alone he would sit for half the day like a man in a trance. But Mrs. Cranbury and Janet were ever on the watch for these fits of despondency, and seldom gave him an opportunity for the indulgence of despair.

One of these gloomy attacks had laid hold of him on the day Mrs. Murch proposed visiting the warehouse in Abchurch Road, and that good woman, therefore, had a clear field before her.

Asking for Mr. Gray on arriving, she was shown at once by a disingenuous junior clerk into the counting-house, where Mr. Mellor and David Gray were busy with the afternoon's letters.

"Bless me, Mrs. Murch," cried Gray, jumping off his stool, "what brings you here?"

"Nothing the matter with Murch, I hope," said Mr. Mellor, kindly.

"It's hard to tell, thanking you gentleman both," replied Mrs. Murch, dropping them an old-fashioned courtesy, which the pride of the present age looks upon as the very essence of servility, "but I'm afraid something is the matter. He ought to have written to me every other day, but there's four days gone, and I've heard nothing from him."

"And where is he?" asked Mr. Mellor.

"In the country," interposed David Gray, hastily, "looking for his daughter, poor fellow. What was Mr. Cranbury saying about him yesterday?"

"That he wished to have him back," said Mr. Mellor.

"On what terms?" inquired Mrs. Murch, stifening her back slightly. "Was he sorry for what he said to Job?"

"He did not express so much," said Mr. Mellor, "but I daresay he is."





["FOR LIFE OR DEATH!" HISSED PIERRE. "SO BE IT!" WAS THE ANSWER.]

"He will be seriously concerned if anything happens to March," said David Gray; "don't you think I ought to let him know that something is wrong?"

"If you really think there is anything wrong," returned Mr. Mellor; "perhaps he hasn't written because he had nothing to write about."

But Mrs. Murch speedily settled this idea by giving a brief account of the arrangements she had made for the receipt of regular communications. As a final piece of consolation for her, Mr. Mellor suggested that a letter might have miscarried in the post.

"I wrote the directions on the envelope," said Mrs. Murch, with emphasis, and the head clerk retired from the field.

Of course a letter directed by Mrs. Murch could not fail to come to hand.

"I say, Mellor," said David Gray, after shifting about a while uneasily, "the correspondence is not very heavy to-day."

"No, it is not—but what of that?"

"Do you think you could do it all? I think I shall run down to Clapham."

"I'll take the work with pleasure," said Mr. Mellor, "but don't forget that Mr. Cranbury is unwell. He has not been fit to endure agitation for a long time past."

"I shall, of course, see Mrs. Cranbury first," said David Gray, as he slipped on his coat. "Now, Mrs. Murch, we will be off. Good day, Mellor."

"Good day."

"And if I should not come to-morrow don't be surprised."

"My good fellow——"

"I assure you it may be the case. I am going to speak quite as plainly as Murch did, and may meet with the same reward."

"Oh, nonsense!" rejoined Mr. Mellor; "don't you go putting your head into the lion's mouth. What am I to do if you leave me here alone?"

"I shall leave a successor."

"I don't think I could ever stand a stranger. Do nothing rash."

"I have a duty to perform," said David Gray,

as he nodded adieu, "which must be done at any cost."

He gallantly offered Mrs. Murch his arm, but that lady declined it gratefully, adding that "she had never wanted a man's arm yet, and only took Job's on the morning when they went to church to be made one"—that is to be made into Mrs. Murch—"but she was obliged all the same."

"Very well," replied David, and they left the warehouse together.

Outside he hailed a cab.

"I am going to drop you at your house," he said, "as what I have to say to Mr. Cranbury can best be said by me alone."

"You think I would break in with a lot of gabble like some women," she said, slightly flushing.

"Not at all, I assure you. I never dreamt of such a thing, only I think I had better go alone."

"Very well, sir."

He dropped Mrs. Murch at the corner of Stamford Street by her request, and drove on to Clapham. Arriving at The Knoll, he inquired if Mrs. Cranbury was at home, and whether she would be good enough to see him alone. The request was granted and he was shown into her boudoir.

"Do not be alarmed, Mrs. Cranbury," he said, seeing that she looked pale and agitated; "I bring you no further ill news than that will in any way concern you. I only wish to know if I could see Mr. Cranbury."

"You come on business?" said Mrs. Cranbury.

"No, not exactly."

"Is it anything likely to agitate him?"

"I only wish to ask him for a week's leave, and to give him my reason for asking it."

"There can be no harm in that," said Mrs. Cranbury, rising; "perhaps he will come to you here if you wait a minute."

Mrs. Cranbury left the room, and after a short waiting David Gray found himself in the pre-

sence of his employer, who looked pale, but was collected and spoke in his usual tone.

"You want to ask me for leave, I hear, Gray?"

"Yes, sir—a week's leave. I know that it is unusual for us to have a holiday at this time of year, but I do not want the time for pleasure-seeking."

"It is an unusual request, Gray," said the merchant, "and I really should like to know why it is made."

David Gray had expected this request, and had come prepared to answer it. Metaphorically shutting his eyes he ran forward and plunged into the gulf.

"Murch is missing, and I wish to go and see what has become of him."

Mr. Cranbury, who had hitherto been standing, sat down and stared at his clerk like a man who is astounded at a piece of cool impudence.

"Murch missing!" he said; "when missing? and what has it to do with you?"

"He went down to Exmoor to watch the movements of that scoundrel, Count Orsera," replied David, calmly, "and has, like the other people who stood in the count's path, met with foul play."

"Are you too infected with hatred for and suspicion of an honourable gentleman?" said Mr. Cranbury, who was taking the matter more coolly than David Gray expected. "What right have you to call him a scoundrel?"

"By the right of knowing him to be what I say," replied David. "He has had a hand in all the foul play that has made such misery in this once happy home. Don't be angry, Mr. Cranbury, but hear me out. I can give you proof; you see this phial?"

He held up the small bottle in which Jenny's medicine had been poured on the night she was so mysteriously spirited away. It seemed to be half filled with water, and Mr. Cranbury began to think that his clerk had taken leave of his wits.

"Yes," he said, "I see it. What then?"

"It contains a poison, slow in its action, but

very deadly," replied David, "and it is the medicine that Count Orsera has given to that poor girl, Peggy Murch."

"Is this true?" asked Mr. Cranbury, with the fierce light of truth breaking in upon him.

"Why should I lie?" asked David Gray. "I took the stuff from her at her father's house, and I placed half the contents of this phial in the hands of one of the most skilful analysts of the day. He says it is a solution charged with aconite, so prepared that its action shall be gradual, and at last when the victim dies leaves no trace."

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Cranbury, "what villainy there is in the world!"

"The society around us," said David Gray, "is full of dark secrets, some of which will never see the light in this world, but the mystery of your son's disappearance—"

"Disappearance, Gray—you mean death?"

"I mean what I say. I do think that neither he nor Peggy are dead; but I can give no reason for so thinking beyond the fact that this conviction of their being alive has grown upon me. The count is not alone in this villainy, and I have resolved to get at the bottom of it."

"You are a good fellow, Gray," said Mr. Cranbury, "but what will you do?"

"I can do so little alone," David replied, "but with your aid much. Help me with your money; let me call in skilful and experienced aid."

Here the door suddenly opened, cutting short this appeal, and Mrs. Cranbury appeared.

"My dear," she said, "there is another visitor—a stranger—who urgently requests to see you. Do you think you are strong enough to give him an interview?"

"Did he give his name?" Mr. Cranbury asked.

"He said it was Fawcett, and he looked to me very much like a police officer in plain clothes."

"I know the man, sir," said David, "he is an inspector of the detective force, and one of the best men of Scotland Yard. If you cannot see him let him come to me."

"But I can see him," said Mr. Cranbury, with a sensible return of his former vigour. "My dear, have Inspector Fawcett shown into the library, and we will come to him."

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### "GIVE ME THE DAGGER."

And she, to disappoint the foe,  
Rushed in between him and the blow—  
And now her corpse is lying low.

PIERRE and the count were dosset together in the private apartment of the latter, where they had apparently met for the purpose of conviviality. On the table was a decanter of wine, half-emptied glasses stood near them, and both were smoking, the count with his usual airy satisfaction, and Pierre with gloomy discontent.

"It is the way of women," the count remarked, as he emptied his glass and refilled it. "They are one thing to-day and another to-morrow."

"It is HER way," muttered Pierre, "but she may find that I have been trifled with too long."

"Would you revenge yourself upon a woman?" asked the count.

"Why not?" demanded Pierre.

"It is a little base, is it not? Unworthy of a man, eh?"

"Pshaw! How you talk—you who have revenged yourself upon women freely. How many? Can I count them on my fingers?"

"I was driven to it," said the count, calmly; "but you are not."

"Not driven?" cried Pierre, passionately.

"No. If you think so, tell me how."

"Does she not again encourage this Wharton—Lord Mowerby?"

"Well, what of that?"

"Is it not enough? Am I not driven to the very precipice of despair?"

"Say that it is so, my good Pierre—what do you propose to do?"

"I cannot tell you that, count," said Pierre, gloomily.

"But I must know—or, rather, I do know," returned the count. "You mean to kill her. Now, in the first place, I object to that. Is she not my blood relative?"

"Is she not growing disobedient to you? Do we not hear her speak with defiance? She laughs at me and defies you."

"So it is, but you must not take her life. You may frown, but you must not. You are a fool. Will killing her do good? No; it is ~~not~~ you must kill."

Pierre looked startled, closely scanning the count, who puffed his cigar vigorously and smiled with the softness of an amiable philanthropist.

"Kill him!" said Pierre; "and he with the safeguard of the chief?"

"It could be done secretly," said the count. "I know that he has come hither without informing any of his friends whither he has bent his steps. It was wise for him to do so. And now mark—he is here, in a lonely place. If he dies there are a thousand and one places where he could be buried and no man find him."

"So," said Pierre, nodding.

"Again I tell you that I should have to bear the blame. But who is to put it on me? Not you, surely, my good Pierre?"

"No, as I live."

"It is enough, then. He will die here and simply disappear. The society cannot hold me to the charge of killing him unless it is known that he is dead."

"You forget Barnes and the other fellow, and that big woman the wife of Barnes."

"I forget nothing—I never do. This morning I tell this much. The prisoners are gone, I say; 'what have you to do? Go and take a holiday.' Then Mrs. Barnes asks if my lord will want anything. To this I say, 'No, he is going early. He will not be here when you return.' So all is prepared, Pierre. You have only to summon the little courage you possess, and the thing is done."

"How and when shall I do it?" asked Pierre, furiously.

"He is walking in the grounds now," replied the count, as he opened a drawer in the table, and took out a small, well-finished revolver. "You can surely find a way to put him to sleep."

"Give me that pistol," said Pierre; "I see that you wish to be free of him as well as I. Give me the pistol, I say."

"Steady your nerves with a little more wine," said the count. "Empty your glass and take another—now another—that's it—you are better. Now cover your boots with the indiarubber socks that you and I have worn often when we have been out diamond hunting. So! it is well. If you shoot behind, between the shoulders is the best mark."

"I'll bring him down," muttered Pierre, between his set teeth.

Putting the weapon in his right hand coat pocket, where it would be ready for use, he pulled over his boots a pair of stout indiarubber socks such as he and the count had often worn in their midnight marauding expeditions.

Skilful burglars as they were, they had never been able to do without this precaution, an improvement upon the thick woollen socks the burglarious gentry of the last generation used to affect.

He was in a furious state, half maddened by jealousy, and such little conscience as he could boast of pretty well stifled with drink. A fitter tool for the purpose of the count could not be found.

With his dark eyes gleaming he went softly downstairs, passing through the hall and turning down the passage that led to the kitchen, intending to slip out by a small back door. He had already reconnoitred the position of his hated enemy. Lord Mowerby was sauntering up and down a path between two thick-set fences—either of them a safe screen for a would-be assassin.

But stealthy as his movements were, they were not unobserved. Euphrosia, from the window of her room, beheld him creeping towards the fence, and, without seeing the revolver he grasped in his hand, guessed his deadly purpose and resolved to thwart it.

Not that she had any great love for Lord Mowerby, for whatever sympathy there might have been between them in the past, it was now dead. A year, a month, or it might be a week ago she would have heard of his death with indifference, or seeing him in danger would not have felt it her duty to warn him.

But now all was changed.

Euphrosia had become another woman. A tenderness of heart that had slumbered since her earliest childhood reasserted itself, and she could not have seen her most bitter foe come to a violent end with indifference.

A woman's heart is like a kernel of wheat. Hide it away for years, bury it in a tomb, do what you will with it so that it is not absolutely crushed and broken, and by-and-by, when it shall be blessed with a little sunshine and rain, it will shoot up heavenward.

And Euphrosia's heart had been touched at last. She had fallen in love with Jack Cranbury, to find that there was no possible return for her. She saw that he could never love her, and this knowledge opened up the vista of her wasted life.

Some would have grown more evil in their despair, but not so Euphrosia. The shame and grief that was softened her, and out of the darker depths of her soul there came the tender shoot of compassion. She looked back upon the past and wept over it. Thus was she saved.

Seeing Pierre now bent upon an errand of death, for the tiger-like movements of the assassin were unmistakable, she hurried down to warn the man whose life was in danger, not because she had loved him once and in her wild passionate way trusted him, but simply because he was a living creature in peril. She would have done as much for Job Murch—or for one of the twin brothers at the Big Find if they had been similarly placed.

She left the house by the front door, with swift and quick footsteps, unheeded by Pierre, whose thoughts were centered in his quarry. Crouching by a thick part of the fence where there was just one narrow opening for him to shoot through, he listened to the firm steady tread of the approaching footstep.

Nearer and nearer it came, and he cocked the weapon ready. When Lord Mowerby was by the slight opening in the fence he would not be three feet away—a mere tyro in the art of shooting could not fail to bring him down.

Nearer and nearer—only a few paces now, and he would be there. Pierre calculated his height and took aim—nearer and nearer.

His shadow fell upon the ground; then he, too, came in sight. With set teeth Pierre steadied his aim, and then a form rushed in between. Ere he could realise who or what it was he fired.

A shout from Lord Mowerby and a gasping sob from a woman's lips, and Pierre saw what he had done.

Euphrosia lay stretched on the ground with her life fast ebbing away. She had received the bullet in her heart.

"Help! Who has done this? Help!" cried Lord Mowerby, and Pierre breaking through the fence confronted him.

"I did it," he said. "It was an accident. That bullet was meant for you, but I have others in store."

Lord Mowerby was not devoid of courage, and in addition was an athlete. Quick as thought he sprang upon Pierre, and a deadly struggle for the mastery ensued. He had grasped the wrist of the arm that held the revolver, and by sheer force turned the deadly muzzle from him.

"For life or death," hissed Pierre.

"So be it," was the answer.

They made no noise beyond the trampling with their feet and the gasps that involuntarily escaped them as they struggled to and fro. Hand to hand and foot to foot they fought for the



mastery, debating with all their might every inch of ground.

At last Pierre felt his strength giving. He could struggle no longer, and in the wild fear and fury that laid hold of him he began to shriek aloud, his voice echoing horribly among the rocks around.

Of all cries that come from the human lips there is none to compare with the cry of agony that springs from a man when he sees death.

His strength exhausted, Pierre fell with a crash, and Lord Mowbray, wrenching the pistol from his hand, pointed it towards him, crying out:

"Now beg for your life, you dog."

"And lose it, after all," gasped Pierre. "I'll not beg."

"I give you five seconds to plead for mercy."

"If pleading would save me, I would do it! Tell me—"

"Ah!"

Then a gasp and a sob combined escaped Lord Mowbray's lips as he staggered forward a step and fell across the prostrate Pierre—upon his face. Behind him stood Count Orsera, calmly wiping a stiletto upon his handkerchief.

"You bungler," he said, to Pierre, "get up and help me with Euphrosia. I fear she is dying."

"But this Mowbray—" said Pierre, as he drew himself free from his prostrate foe.

"Will never speak again," replied the count. "Do you think that I strike twice? Help me with Euphrosia."

She was senseless, but still breathed, and there were no signs of blood about her. Pierre wondered at this, and remarked as they raised her that perhaps after all she was but little hurt.

"The less blood the less hope," replied the count; "she is bleeding inwardly."

They took her in, and having laid her upon a couch in one of the lower rooms the count examined the wound—Pierre standing by with an anxious face—for now a revulsion of feeling had set in, and the thought of her dying was horrible to him.

"You are in no hurry to speak," he said, at last. "Is the wound serious?"

"There is no man living who could save her," replied the count. "You blundering fool!"

"I did not know that she was near," replied Pierre, gloomily, "but perhaps it is better as it is."

"Perhaps," said the count, with an unnatural calmness upon him. "But leave us. She will recover from her swoon directly, and what passes between her and me at this hour is not for your eyes or ears."

"I would ask her to forgive me," said Pierre, piteously.

"Begone, man."

"I have loved her, count, and now that she is dying—"

"She never cared for you living and does not want you now that her time has come. Go, man, and trouble her no more."

Then Pierre went out and paced slowly up and down the corridor, pausing now and then at the door to listen. After a while he heard confused murmurings and the sobbing of a man or woman, he could not tell which. Perhaps it was both.

Then slowly the sounds ceased and there was a long silence.

Pierre was leaning against the opposite wall when the count came forth, very pale, with a curious look in his eyes. It was not a softened expression, nor was it a bitter one. To Pierre it was incomprehensible.

"Have you done nothing since I dismissed you?" asked the count.

"Nothing but linger here," replied Pierre. "But Euphrosia—"

"Never breathe her name again," cried the count, turning upon him fiercely; "never, as you value your life. In there lies the cold form of the only being I have ever cared for."

"It is a pity you did not make her path smoother, then."

"Do you bandy words with me, you dog?"

"Why should I not?" asked Pierre. "Is there any reason why I should not?"

"Peace," said the count.

"But I will not hold my peace," replied Pierre, defiantly. "We have been comrades together in many an evil deed, but in never a good one. Would you deny to me a share in grieving for Euphrosia?"

"I tell you not to name her."

"And I will not have my tongue fettered by you—or living man."

The count turned his dark glittering eyes upon him and stood gazing at him for a moment in silence. "You will obey me," he said.

"I will not," replied Pierre. "I have been your slave too long. I defy you."

He was turning away with a mocking laugh when the count suddenly sprang upon him, seized him by the throat, and they rolled over upon the ground together.

It was long after dark when Barnes and his wife returned to The Hollows. Having been favoured with a holiday they had spent it as a great many foolish people do by getting on the wrong side of sobriety. Both were very much the worse for drink, and this in Barnes's case was simply a piece of madness.

The wounds he had on his head had not healed, nor could he be expected to do so for some days, but were in that state when alcoholic liquors ought to be used very moderately or abandoned altogether.

But he had been drinking, and with all sorts of mixed liquors in his stomach and the fumes in his injured head, he was in that state of mind when a board on his back marked "dangerous" would have been of good service to any one coming near him.

The count, wrapped in furs, was standing by the door smoking and gazing at the stars as if he were really interested in the study of those celestial orbs. He gave the pair of Bacchanals a friendly nod of welcome.

"It is a good thing that you have come," he said, "for I am much alone."

"Alone, count," said Mrs. Barnes. "Where is his lordship?"

"Gone back to town."

"And Mr. Pierre, and my lady Euphrosia?"

"They are all gone," said the count, gracefully waving his hand. "The place was so dull for them, so they spread their wings and flew to brighter scenes."

Here Barnes, who had been regarding him with drunken animosity, broke in:

"I say, count," he said.

"Well! my good friend Barnes."

"Gone away. Spread their wings," smiled Barnes. "Oh, count! what a liar you are!"

(To be continued.)

THE Rev. J. G. Wood is preparing a work to be called *The Horse and the Locomotive*. Mr. Wood is not at all satisfied with the orthodox treatment of horses. In his new book he is taking a good deal of trouble to describe the beautiful structure of the hoof, with its thousand springs, which farriers so recklessly cut away. He contends that for saddle and light draught shoes are an injury rather than otherwise, and that when shoeing is necessary, neither the sole nor the frog should be cut away.

THERE is now some prospect of the National Gallery being opened to the public in the evening, owing to the success which has attended the experimental lighting of the British Museum by means of electricity. One of the main objections to the illumination of the gallery by gas has hitherto been the possible injury which the pictures might thereby sustain, to say nothing of the risk of damage by fire. These objections would, however, be removed by the introduction of the electric light, while the opening of the collection to public view in the evening will do much towards terminating the long-standing controversy as to the advisability of throwing it open on Sundays.

## IN THE OLD HALL.

A SHORT STORY FROM THE GERMAN.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

THERE had been a christening in the afternoon, and evening was now closing in. The father and mother of the infant sat with their guests in the large hall. Among them was the father's grandmother.

The others, too, were all near relations, young and old; but the grandmother was a whole generation in advance of the eldest of them.

The baby was called Barbara, after her; but they had given it a prettier name besides, for Barbara alone seemed too old-fashioned for the sweet little child. Still, it was to be called by this name—at least, so said the parents—however much the rest of the friends might object to it.

But the grandmother did not know that the use of her ancient name had been called in question.

The clergyman, shortly after the discharge of his office, had departed, leaving the family circle to themselves; and then old familiar stories were brought forth, and repeated, not even now for the last time.

They all knew each other; the old people had seen the younger ones grow up, and the elder had seen the old grow grey. The most amusing anecdotes were related of the childhood of all present.

When no one else remembered them, the grandmother could always tell them. Of her, alone, no one had anything to tell; her early years lay behind the birthdays of all the others—those who could have told stories of her youth must have been old indeed.

While engrossed in such discourse the daylight had slowly faded. The hall lay towards the west.

A ruddy glow fell through the windows upon the roses in the garlands of plaster-work which adorned the white walls; soon this, too, died away. From afar, in the now growing stillness, was heard a low, monotonous murmur. Several of the guests paused to listen.

"It is the sea," said the young mother.

"Aye," said the grandmother, "I have heard it often; it has made the same sound for a long time."

Then no one spoke again. Without, before the window, a great linden tree stood in the narrow paved court, and they heard the sparrows going to rest among the leaves. The host took his wife's hand, who sat silent by his side. His eyes rested on the old-fashioned ceiling.

"What are you thinking about?" asked the grandmother.

"There is a crack in the ceiling," said he, "and the cornice, too, has given way. The hall is getting old, grandmother; we must rebuild it."

"The hall is not so old yet," she replied. "I well remember when it was built."

"Built!—then what was here before?"

"Before?" repeated the grandmother, and for a time she sat silent, looking like a lifeless statue. Her gaze was turned back on a bygone time—her thoughts were with the shadows of things whose being had long passed away. At last she said:—"It is eighty years ago; your grandfather and I, we often spoke of it afterwards,—in those days the door of the hall did not lead to another room, but opened on a little flower-garden; but it is not the same door—the other was a glass one—and when you came into the hall by the front door, you could see through it straight down to the garden, into which a short flight of steps, with bright-coloured Chinese railings, led. Flower borders, edged with box, lay on either hand, divided down the centre by a broad path strewn with white shells, at the end of which was an arbour of lindens. Between two cherry trees, in front of this, hung a swing, and on both sides of the arbour apricot trees were carefully trained along the high

garden wall. Here, in summer, your great-grandfather might be seen regularly at noon, walking up and down, tending his auriculas and tulips, and tying them with strips of matting and little white wands. He was a strict, precise man, with a military bearing, and his black eyebrows, with his powdered hair, gave him a striking appearance.

"Thus it was on an August afternoon, when your grandfather came down the steps into the little garden—but in those days he was far from being a grandfather. I see him still with my old eyes, as he approached with his light step to where your great-grandfather stood. Then he took a letter from a neatly-worked pocket-book, and presented it with a graceful bow. He was a slender young man, with soft, dark eyes, and his black hair, tied in a queue behind, contrasted pleasantly with his fresh face and cloth coat of pearl grey. When your great-grandfather had read the letter, he nodded and shook your grandfather by the hand, a sign of favour he did not show to everyone. Then he was called into the house, and your grandfather strolled down the garden.

"In the swing in front of the arbour sat a little girl of eight years; on her lap was a picture-book, in which she was quite absorbed; the bright, golden curls drooped over the hot little face, on which the full blaze of the sunshine fell.

"What is your name?" asked the young man.

"She shook back her curls and said: 'Barbara.'

"Then take care, Barbara; your curls are melting in the sun."

"The little one hastily put her hand on her glowing hair. The young man smiled, and it was a very sweet smile.

"It is not so bad," he said. "Come and have a swing."

"She jumped in.

"Wait; I must put away my book first."

"Then she took it into the arbour. When she came back he wished to lift her into the swing.

"No," she said, "I can get in myself." Then she seated herself upon the board, and cried, "Go on!"

"And now your grandfather pushed so that his queue behind flew from right to left; the swing with the little maiden went up and down in the sunshine, the bright curls streamed back from her temples; and yet it never went high enough for her. But when it flew rustling among the linden-boughs, the birds darted forth on either side, from the fruit trees on the walk, so that the over-ripe apricots fell to the ground.

"What was that?" said he, stopping the swing.

"She laughed that he could ask such a question."

"It is only the blackbird," she said. "He is not usually so frightened."

"He lifted her out of the swing, and they went together to the apricot trees—the deep golden fruit lay among the branches.

"Your friend the blackbird has left that for you!"

"She shook her head, and put a beautiful apricot into his hand.

"For you!" she said, softly.

"Then your great-grandfather came back to the garden. 'Take care,' said he, smiling, 'or you'll never get rid of her again.' Then he spoke about business, and they both went into the house.

"In the evening little Barbara was allowed to sit up to supper: the kind young man had begged permission for her. It certainly did not all come just as she wished, for the guest sat by her father at the head of the table; and she, being quite a little girl, had her place at the other end, beside the youngest of the clerks. So she very quickly finished her supper, and then got down and slipped round to her father's chair. But he was so deeply engrossed talking to the young man about interest and per centage, that the latter had no eyes at all for the little Barbara. Ay, ay, it is eighty years ago, but the old grandmother remembers still how impatient the little Barbara of those days was,

and how far from on the best of terms with her kind father. The clock struck ten, and now she had to say good night. When she came to your grandfather he asked, 'Shall we swing to-morrow?' and little Barbara was quite happy again. 'He will quite spoil my little girl!' said the great-grandfather; but, in truth, he was himself foolishly in love with his little girl.

"Towards evening the following day, your grandfather took his leave.

"Then eight years passed away. In winter time little Barbara often stood at the glass door and breathed upon the frozen panes; then she looked through the peep-hole she had made, down on the snow-covered garden, and thought of the beautiful summer, of the bright leaves and the warm sunshine, of the blackbird, which always made its nest in the fruit trees, and how, once on a time, the ripe apricots had fallen to the ground; and then she thought of that one summer day, and at last, when she thought of summer it was somehow always of that one summer day she thought. So the years passed away; little Barbara was now twice as old, and, in fact, was no longer little Barbara; but that summer day always stood out like a bright spot in her memory. Then one day, at last, he really came back again."

"Who?" asked the grandson, with a smile.

"The summer day?"

"Yes, indeed," said the grandmother; "your grandfather. He was indeed a summer day."

"And then?" he asked again.

"Then," said the grandmother. "There was a betrothed pair, and a little Barbara became your grandmother, who now sits among you all telling her old stories. But it was not yet so far as that. First, there was a wedding, and it was for that your great-grandfather had this hall built. The garden and the flowers were all done away with now; but it did not matter, for he had soon living flowers in their stead to amuse him in his mid-day walks. When the hall was ready, the wedding was celebrated. A merry wedding it was; the guests talked of it for long after. All you who are sitting here, and who must needs be everywhere now, you certainly were not present; but your fathers and grandfathers, your mothers and grandmothers, and they were people, too, who could speak a word in the right place. Folks were certainly quieter and more modest in those days; we didn't think that we understood everything better than the king and his ministers, and anyone who meddled with politics was thought a silly babbler for his pains; and, if it was a cobbler, people went to his neighbour for their shoes. Servant maids were all called Molly and Betty, and all dressed according to their station. Now-a-days you will wear moustaches, as if you were so many officers and cavaliers. I wonder what ye think yourselves? Would you all govern?"

"To be sure, grandmother," said the grandson.

"And the nobles and great folks who are born to it? What is to become of them?"

"Oh!—nobles!" said the young mother, and looked up with proud, loving eyes to her husband.

He smiled, and said:

"Renounce their pretensions, grandmother, or else we must all get titles—the whole country, man and mouse. Otherwise I don't know what is to be done."

The grandmother made no reply. She only said:

"At my wedding there was nothing said about affairs of State. The conversation flowed freely on, and we were just as happy over our talk as you are in your new fashioned kind of parties. At table, amusing riddles were given and extempore verses said, and at dessert, 'A health to my neighbour' was sung, and all the other pretty songs, which are forgotten now. Your grandfather's clear tenor voice was always heard above all the others. People were much more polite to each other in those days; all disputing and arguing was considered very unseemly in good company. Now-a-days that is all changed; but your grandfather was always a gentle, peaceable man. It is a long time since

he left this world; I have stayed long behind him; now it will soon be time for me to follow."

The grandmother was silent for a moment, and no one else spoke. But she felt her hands grasped; they all wished to keep her among them. A peaceful smile passed over the dear old face; then she looked at her grandson, and said:

"Here, in this hall, his coffin stood. You were only six years old, and stood and wept beside it. Your father was a grave, stern man."

"Don't cry, boy," he said, and took you on his arm. 'See there! that is how a true man looks when he is dead.'

"Then he himself secretly wiped a tear from his face. He had always had a great respect for your grandfather. Now they are all on the other side; and to-day I have stood as grandmother to my great-granddaughter in this hall, and you have given her your old grandmother's name. May God grant her as happy and peaceful a life as mine has been!"

The young mother sank on her knees before the grandmother, and kissed her slender hands.

The grandson said:

"Grandmother, we'll pull down the old hall, and plant the flower garden again. Little Barbara, you know, has come back again. The women-folks say she is your image. She shall sit once more in the swing, and the sun will shine again on the golden curls. Perhaps, too, some summer afternoon the grandfather may come down the steps again; perhaps—"

The grandmother smiled.

"You are full of fancies," she said. "Your grandfather was just the same!"

## LOVE.

To love is to live in a world of the heart's own creation, whose forms and colours are as brilliant as they are deceptive and unreal. To those who love there is neither day nor night, summer nor winter, society nor solitude. They have but two eras in their delicious but visionary existence, and those are thus marked in the heart's calendar—*PRESENCE, ABSENCE*. These are the substitutes for all the distinctions of nature and society. The world to them contains but one individual, and that individual is to them the world. The air of his or her presence is the only air they can breathe; in the light of his or her presence is the only sun of their Creation, in which they bask and live. To love is to live in an existence of perpetual contradiction; to feel that absence is insupportable, and yet be doomed to experience the presence of the object as equally so—to be full of ten thousand thoughts when he is absent, the confession of which we dream will render our next meeting delicious; yet, when the hour of meeting arrives, to feel ourselves, by a timidity alike oppressive and unaccountable, robbed of the power of expressing one—to be elegant in his absence and dumb in his presence—to watch for the hour of his return as for the dawn of a new existence, yet when it arrives to feel all those powers suspended which we imagined it would restore to energy—to be the statue that meets the sun, but without the music his presence should draw from it—to watch for the light of his looks, as a traveller in the wilderness looks for the rising of the sun, and when it bursts on our awakened world, to sink fainting under its overwhelming and intolerable glory, and almost wish it were night again—to feel that our existence is so absorbed in his that we have lost all consciousness but of his presence; all sympathy but of his enjoyment; all sense of suffering but when he suffers—to *BE*, only because *HE IS*, and to have no other use of being but to devote it to him; while our humiliation increases in proportion to our devotedness, and the lower we bow before our idol, the prostrations seem less worthy of being the expression of his devotion; till you are *HIS* when you are not yourself. All other sacrifices are inferior; and in it, therefore, all other sacrifices must be included.



## THE READER'S BOOK-MARK.

### ENGLAND IN THE REIGN OF THE SIXTH EDWARD.

DESCRIPTIONS of our own country by foreign eye witnesses generally mortify our vanity, but they sometimes show us in what our real merit consists.

One of the earliest of these descriptions of England is that of Master Stephen Perlin, a French physician, who was in Great Britain in the last two years of King Edward VI., and saw some of the remarkable events that marked the commencement of the reign of Queen Mary. His "Description of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland" was published in Paris in 1558. The original pamphlet is very rare, but it was reprinted, with another Frenchman's account of England, by Gough, the antiquary, in 1775. The hatred of the English seems to have been a genuine sentiment of revenge for the hatred which he saw bestowed by our people upon his own countrymen.

We translate a few passages that may amuse our readers. To begin with, Master Stephen says:—"It may be said of the English, neither in war are they brave, nor in peace are they faithful; and, as the Spaniard says, England is a good land with bad people;" and he adds, that "people of this nation mortally hate the French, as their old enemies, and always call us 'France cheneve, France dogue,' and, besides, they call us 'or son.'" "Cheneve" meant knaves.

Again:—"The people are proud and seditious, with bad consciences, and are faithless to their word, as experience has taught. These villains hate all sorts of foreigners; and although they have a good land and a good country, they are all constantly wicked and moved by every wind; for now they will love a prince; turn your hand, they will wish him killed and crucified. . . . In this kingdom of England there are two universities, viz., Cambruches and Auxonne, called in Latin 'Auxonia,' Cambruche, in Latin 'Cambrusium.' The people of the country do not frequent them at all, or very little, and do not give themselves up much to letters, but only to vanity and ambition, and merchandise. . . . The people are reprobates, and all enemies to good manners and letters."

Master Perlin describes the fatal attempt to place Lady Jane Grey upon the throne. He was present at the execution of the Duke of Northumberland, and says: "A lamentable thing to see a man beneath whom a whole kingdom trembled, to see him in the hands of an executioner; and the executioner was lame (for I was present at the execution), and he had a white apron like a butcher. This great lord made great lamentations and regrets at death, and said this oration in English, throwing himself on his two knees, looking up to heaven, and weeping passionately: 'Lorde God mi fatre prie fort ous piores siners nond vand in the hoore of our theath,' which means in French, 'Seigneur Dieu, mon pere, prie pour nous hommes et pauvres pecheurs, et principalement à l'heure de nostre mort.' And after the execution you might have seen little children taking up the blood that had fallen through the chinks of the scaffold on which he had been decapitated. In this country they place the head on a pole of wood."

"In this country you will not meet with any great nobles whose relations have not had their heads cut off. Certes I should like better (with the reader's leave) to be a swineherd and preserve my head. For this affliction falls furiously upon the heads of the great nobles. For you will see these great lords in grand pomp and magnificence for a time; turn your head, you will see them in the hands of the executioner."

"In France justice is well administered, and not tyranny, as in England, which is the pest and ruin of a country: for a kingdom ought to be governed, not in shedding human blood in such

abundance that the blood flows by streams, by which means the good are troubled."

"In England there is so cruel a justice that for nothing they have a man killed; for where in France they would condemn a man to be whipped, here, without fail, he would be condemned to die. It is true, there are only two kinds of justice, namely, hanging and decapitation; and thus a malefactor gains as much by doing a great deal of evil as a little, which ought not to be; and the practice is better in France, where there are several kinds of punishments according to the crime. In this island they have no wheel, nor any other punishments than the two I have mentioned. They make the poor criminals and condemned malefactors suffer on gibbets of wood outside the city, if they are not Milords, barbarously in French Milours, whom they kill in London to terrify the people."

But despite his dislike of the English people, the Frenchman seemed to relish English hospitality. He talks of the good cheer that he had, "unworthy as he was," at the house of the Lord Ouardon (Lord Warden), and says: "The people of this place make great cheer, and like much to banquet, and you will see many rich taverns, and tavern-keepers who have customarily large purses, in which are three or four small purses full of money; consequently we may consider that this country is very full of money, and that the tradespeople gain more in a week than those of Germany or Spain in a month. For you will see hatters and joiners, artizans, generally playing their crowns at tennis, which is not ordinarily seen in any other place, and particularly on a working-day. And in a tavern they make good cheer oftener than once a day with rabbits, and hares, and every sort of food."

"The English, one with the other, are joyous, and are very fond of music; for there is not ever so small a church in which music is not sung; and they are great drinkers; for if an Englishman wishes to treat you, he will say to you in his language: 'Vis dring a quarta rim oim gasquim oim hespaingol, oim malvoysi,' which means, 'Veux tu venir boire une quarte de vin du gascoigne, une autre d'espaigne, et une autre de malvoisie.' In drinking and in eating they will say to you more than a hundred times, 'Drind ion,' and you will reply to them in their language, 'Iplaigiu.' If you thank them, you say to them in their language, 'God tanque artelay.' Being drunk, they will swear to you by blood and death that you shall drink all that you hold in your cup, and will say to you thus, 'Bigod sol drind ion agoud ion.' Now, remember (if you please) that in this country they generally use vessels of silver when they drink wine; and they will say to you usually at table, 'Goud chere.' The servants wait on their masters bareheaded, and leave their bonnets on the buffet. . . . "They use a great deal of beer, double and single, and they drink it not in glasses, but in earthenware pots, of which the handles are silver, and the cover; and this in houses where they are rather rich. For among the poor the covers of the beer-pots are merely of pewter, and in some places above villages the beer-pots are only of wood. They use much whiter bread than in France, and it was in my time as cheap as in France; and with their beer they have a custom of using very soft cakes, in which there are raisins, and which make you find the double beer very good; and I have had formerly at the Rie, a sea-port, as good as ever I drank in any country in the world. The people of this country are very good in the furniture of their houses, as good as any people in the world."

Speaking of the outside streets he says:—"In this country all shops of all trades are open, like those of the barbers in France, and they have a great many openings of glass, as well in the workshops as in the higher chambers; for in the chambers you will see many windows of glass, and in almost all the houses of every town, although they belong to tradespeople; and all the houses here are like the working places of the barbers of France, as well above as below; and you will see in their workshops and windows, as often in towns as in villages, a great many

flowers, and in taverns a great deal of hay on the wooden benches, and many tapestried cushions on which the travellers sit down."

"The English make great use of tapestries and of painted linens, which are well done, and on which are many magnificent roses embellished with fleurs de lis and lions, for you can enter but few houses where you do not find these tapestries."

And of the country he remarks:—"The country is well covered and shady, for the lands are all enclosed with hedges, oaks, and several other sorts of trees, so that in travelling you think you are in a perpetual wood, but you will discover many flights of steps which are called in English ampheres [atiles], and by which persons on foot go along little paths and enter the grounds; persons on horseback do not go thus, but go on the high road between trees and bushes. In this country there are no shepherds who generally keep the sheep, but they usually leave them in the woods morning and evening, and in the open fields." He tells us, moreover, that "the English are excellent at all sorts of fruits, as apricots and peaches." The people are all armed; and the labourers, when they till the ground, leave their swords and their bows in a corner of the field.

We conclude with Master Perlin's last words, "And this is enough about England."

### EXTRAORDINARY MAGNANIMITY.

LIVIA, a noble lady of the city of Foili, had an only son, named Scipio, adorned with every accomplishment, and warmly attached to his mother. He was enamoured of a beautiful lady who was sought by many suitors, and amongst these a young man, whom Scipio, the favoured lover, accidentally encountered. They quarrelled, and fought, and the son of the widow received a wound of which he expired soon after. The homicide was instantly pursued by the officers of justice, and, seeing the door of Livia's mansion standing open, sought refuge in the apartment of the mother of Scipio, and implored her protection. She granted his request, and concealed him. Suddenly the door opened, and the corpse of her beloved son was brought into the room. The unfortunate mother burst into loud lamentations, and was rendered so insensible by grief that she did not perceive the officers searching for and discovering the murderer, whom she had taken under her protection. When she saw him brought in fettered, her affection for her son was subdued by her sense of honour. She denied his having been the cause of her son's death, but the young man, seeing the certainty of death before him, made the last effort, and in moving accents implored the forgiveness of the mother of his enemy, offering to replace the loss she had sustained, and in every respect to become her son, promising the most dutiful and filial affection. Notwithstanding her arms clung to the dead body of her murdered child, she was moved by the speech of the murderer, and after a struggle of maternal affection and pity for the young man, the latter gained the ascendancy, and she not only forgave the homicide, but adopted him as a son. The magistrate of the city was a rigid executor of justice, and though he admired the eloquence of the youth and the compassion of the mother, he ordered the culprit to be imprisoned, and executed the following day; nor could the reasons of Livia, who represented herself as the person most deeply injured, and who conjured him not to deprive her of her adopted son, who would console her for the one she had lost, move him from his resolution. Prospero Colonna, the lord of the city, was fortunately present, to whom she presented her case, and prevailed. The young man was pardoned, and for many years, under the adopted name of Scipio, consoled the afflicted Livia by the most assiduous filial affection. Upon her deathbed she took the most tender leave of him, and left him all her property. Her memory was honoured by a monument, upon which was recorded her noble treatment of the homicide and his filial regret at her departure.

## BEDS AND BEDROOMS.

In Sardou's comedy, "La Famille Benoiton," there is a character who has but one test of national or individual progress, who never hears of a foreign country or strange people without inquiring, "Et leur literie?" If their bedding is not of the best, their civilisation is proportionately deficient in his estimation, and when he hears of a people without beds he lifts his hands and eyes in fearful horror and astonishment. He is an upholsterer and bedding manufacturer, and he has but that one standard of elevation and refinement embodied in his eternal question, "What of their bedding?" This whimsical creation is not altogether an extravagant one, for our luxuries and refinement in the sleeping department have indeed progressed with, and been in intimate connection with, our national onward and upward progress. In the early ages of no-beds, when the family slept in their clothes on the floor of the huts, around the fire in winter, and on grass and leaves in the open air when summer reigned, civilisation was certainly at a very low ebb; and luxurious sleeping accommodation has invariably been one of the crowning elements of domestic luxury when nations had grown powerful and great. And yet one of our latest improvements in this direction—metal bedsteads—which have now almost entirely displaced the old carved and polished wooden bedsteads, merely revive the most ancient known form of bedstead, for the earliest of which we have any on record were of bronze, resembling, in their forms, with considerable closeness, those now in use.

The old Roman bed chambers, with their adjoining dressing and bathrooms, placed in that portion of the dwelling in which they were the most remote from noise, with their double walls and passages between them, so that, as Pliny wrote, "neither the voice of the servants, the murmur of the sea, nor even the roaring of the tempest could be heard," were of two kinds—the cubacula dormitorio and the cubacula diurna. Both were provided with lofty, luxuriously-furnished bedsteads, and were very richly furnished and adorned, the one being open to the warm summer day's air, the other "curtained and closed and warm" for nocturnal slumber. We do not now give our couches and sofas separate rooms, but do our lounging and dozing, if we do them at all, after dinner, in the ordinary dining-rooms or parlours. But the day bedroom of a wealthy Roman must have been a very charming place to dream in. There was the tinkle and the soft musical plashing of little fountains, the subdued music of singing birds, the gentle rustle of clustering vine leaves, through which the sun and balmy air were filtered ere they reached the languid and drowsy occupant of the roomy, luxurious couch. Rich paintings of flowers, birds, and insects adorned the ceilings and upper halves of the walls, and the bedstead was generally so placed, and the head raised at such an angle, as presented to the half-sleeping eyes some delightful view of a garden or distant scenery, wood and water, hill and mountain, sea, lake, or river. Doesn't this sort of thing make one fancy that day bedrooms would, after all, be rather jolly things for another revival, to follow that of the metallic bedstead? One might do worse when furnishing one's house than carry out that idea of those luxurious old-world conquerors, who were once our masters.

MISERIES OF INDOLENCE.—None so little enjoy life, and are such burdens to themselves, as those who have nothing to do. The active only have the true relish of life. He who knows not what it is to labour, knows not what it is to enjoy. Recreation is only valuable as it unbends us. The idle know nothing of it. It is exertion that renders rest delightful, and sleep sweet and undisturbed. The happiness of life depends on the regular prosecution of some laudable purpose or calling which engages, helps and enlivens all our powers.

FICHU AND RINGLET.  
A CAMP-FIRE STORY.

## CHAPTER I.

WE lay in bivouac. It was the eve before the battle of Temesvar. Our Uhlans—encamped upon the open plain, with their horses fastened together by twos and threes—squatted in groups around the crackling camp fires, and, enveloped in their long, trooper cloaks, sought protection against the drizzling rain.

We officers had an old, half-ruined hut, which—God knows for what purpose!—had been built here on the deserted heath, but which now, by the contrivance of our quartermaster, offered much better night-quarters than active service in the field usually affords.

Our men, of their own good will, had made for us out of hay and straw a very comfortable sleeping place. Upright sheaves of straw—each with a truss of hay before it—were drawn up like so many chairs along two sides of the hut. In the forenoon we had made a long, weary march, and we now stretched ourselves upon our improvised fauteuils with much more pleasure than upon the plush sofas of the club-room.

Most of us had either fallen asleep or were drowsily nodding, and only a small group in the middle just where the two rows of sheaves joined in one corner were engaged in lively talk.

There were five of them here together, who, brightly illuminated by the fire kindled in the centre of the hut, discussed from time to time the rich Tokay which stood in several long-necked bottles upon a camp stool just before them.

One of these was Colonel du Plat, our commander. He was a Frenchman, and had served under Napoleon. Wounded and captured at Gross-Aspern, he had entered the service of Austria after the war, and now swore, as upon the gospel, by the House of Hapsburg and its rights.

We loved him like a father, and his large blue eyes had great power over us. I once fetched him a report, and found him striding up and down his chamber, blowing great clouds of smoke from his meerschaum pipe, and holding an open letter in his hand. He received the report with thanks, then suddenly exclaimed, his heart overflowing with emotion:

"See here, Lieutenant Malichenski; thus writes my little boy."

With that he handed me the letter he had been reading, and pointed to the postscript, which ran thus:

"DEAR PAPA, thy Francois du Plat greets thee with all his heart."

"He is just three years old," continued the veteran, "and looks like his mother; she guided his hand."

And great tears ran down his cheek.

Next day we had the affair of Solnok, and the veteran colonel was the first man over the trenches.

Beside the colonel sat Captain Tanenzien, formerly a Prussian hussar. Prompt in service, foremost in battle, ever gay and serene at table, he was the particular favourite of our commander. His squadron idolised him, and would have hewn him safely out of an army of enemies.

Exactly why he had left the Prussian service no one knew, but it was generally supposed to have been in consequence of a duel. When, however, it was talked of in the regiment we always sportively said it had been on account of some love affair.

He was a sworn enemy of the fair sex, and protested more than once a day that he would rather sit on a hedge fence than recline on the bosom of the fairest woman.

Upon the left of du Plat sat Lieutenant Bandenbosch. He was our youngest—a mere stripling. The colonel usually kept Bandenbosch about himself, for Bandenbosch, senior—a rich merchant upon the Wiedner suburb—had en-

trusted his darling boy to him in some such fashion as one commits a fair young damsel journeying home for the holidays to the protection of a moustached stage conductor.

Lieutenant Bandenbosch was an only son, and had been destined by his parents for the counting-house; he therefore had become a soldier. For if he had said to his doting father, "Father, I want to be Great Mogul," the old gentleman would have instantly repaired to his desk, and, sighing resignedly, would have written to some commercial friend in Cabul or Ispahan inquiring if it were not possible.

The indulged lad had been a tyrant, but only because he had been made so. At heart he was hale and honest; we knew this and liked him, in spite of a certain affectation.

As we lay shivering in bivouac (it was at Debreczin), we enumerated by turns the hundred different things most lacking to our comfort, grog being first on the list, of course; but when the turn came to Bandenbosch, the youngster said, with all seriousness:

"A piano."

Some laughed, some were vexed, but soon we were all ashamed of our own puerility. The preference of the boy had taught us a lesson.

The other two officers of this group were Lieutenants Hostowitz and Wilson, the former a young Bohemian who had been a cuirassier of the regiment Waldemar, but who had recently been transferred to ours.

Wilson was a Hanoverian, with blonde hair and blue eyes, staid and sober, but well liked for his calm courage and sweet, clear-ringing voice. It is of these two that I am going to relate this story.

Conversation in the service is only too often like the bishops of a game of chess—monotonously running up and down their wretched straight lines, but to-day our talk was like the knight—jumping hither and thither. We talked of Bern and of the Prater, of Dembinski and Strauss-Lanner, of the last brush and the next, and finally, after the fashion of cavalymen, of fine horses and—women.

Lieutenant Hostowitz had just seized his glass, and with a mocking bow gaily cried:

"Hurrah, Tanenzien! The toast is, 'All beautiful women!'"

The captain touched glasses, carefully carried his Tokay under the thatch-roof of his moustaches, and drank. As he set down his glass and grasped the neck of the bottle to pour himself more, he exclaimed, with a marked Prussian accent:

"Pon honour, Hostowitz, were it not so denced cold and wet I should have poured the wine on the earth!"

"He always says that," cried one of the sleepers, of whom several were now awake.

We all laughed heartily, for everybody in the regiment knew that Captain Tanenzien would as soon think of spilling his blood as a glass of Tokay.

"Odsso, Tanenzien!" cried Hostowitz, "I lay you my best spurs that Cupid has played you one of his most roguish tricks."

"That indeed has he!" replied the captain; "and more than once, I assure you. Ev'ny my débet was bad enough and ominous of his malignity. While a student of the third form I fell deeply in love with the rector's niece. We plighted our troth as we came from the dancing lesson. She married the co-rector, who was, beside, my mortal enemy. We gave him a charivari, and I was relegated. Thus began my career. With you, now, Hostowitz, I fancy it was smoother."

"Oh, not always," replied the young Bohemian, who possessed his full share of that graceful, almost amiable, vanity, which so decidedly characterises the Schlawie race.

And as he inclined a little to one side, and, with feigned nonchalance knocked the ashes from his short pipe, his eyes lit up with impatient desire to celebrate once more, in its narration, some one of his numerous triumphs.

"Not always!" replied Tanenzien. "But yet sometimes, eh? Come now, Hostowitz, relate. I fancied that I read something of a romantic episode in your countenance. Nothing more



than an intrigue, perhaps, but certainly that much."

"Nothing," replied Hostowitz, "or everything, according to circumstances."

He paused a moment, then continued with increasing animation:

"Yes, I have some reminiscences. I once dragged a friend out of the Moldau, and his mother's tears fell upon my hand; I have stood at the green table and seen my last thaler grow to a heap of shining gold; I was at Novara, and Radetzki himself pinned this cross upon my breast; but luck, fame, glory, all pale before one thing; the world contains nothing sweeter than stolen love, war has nothing more glorious than the conquest of a woman."

"Except," cried a sweet, resonant voice, "except the conquest of one's self."

We were all alert in a moment. It was Wilson who had spoken. A short pause ensued, then one of the youngsters cast in half-mockingly:

"These are merely opinions."

"Or principles," dryly retorted Wilson.

Colonel du Plat having seized his glass, approached Wilson and said, with almost paternal benevolence of countenance:

"Nobly said, Wilson! Your health!"

Hostowitz coloured to his brow, and hardly regained his composure when Tanenzien, who was always bantering him, laughingly cried:

"Hostowitz, you are beaten."

"I believe it myself," replied the latter, as his blood receded to his heart.

"Not at all, not at all!" cried several of the others, while Bandenbosch added with animation:

"What say you, gentlemen? Let us constitute ourselves a *cour d'amour*, with Colonel du Plat presiding. We have assertion against assertion, and the contest ought to be decided. Reasons, Wilson, reasons! Or still better—stories!"

All had now become animation. Our youngest emptied his glass of tea (he drank nothing but tea), and while the pro and contra of the question were being discussed in lively dialogues, Hostowitz drew near his opponent, shook him by the hand, and gaily cried:

"What say you, Wilson? Shall we take a tilt?"

"I am content," replied Wilson, "but what shall the prize be?"

"The victor shall lead the attack to-morrow," cried the colonel, with flashing eyes.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried all, surprised and delighted at the veteran's happy suggestion.

Hostowitz filled his short clay pipe, lighted it, and blowing the first blue rings gracefully in the air, with apparent tranquillity, thus began:

"It was a year ago; the Piedmontese campaign was just ended, and we lay joyfully—as becomes the conquerors!—feasting on good cheer among the villages along the shores of Lake Como. Our staff was at Lacco; but I was in command of an advance guard on the extreme left wing, three miles further south, just where the Adda emerges from the lake.

"Villas and palaces, as grand and beautiful as the region itself, are here mirrored in the serene and lovely skies which float between the majestic mountains and cling about their lofty heights like garlands of beauty around an ever-smiling brow. I was quartered in one of these palaces. Count L. was my host. And what shall I say of him? He was a count, and more-over an Italian, meagre, old, and as yellow as parchment. When I first beheld him I thought at once of the Knight of La Mancha. My first impression, as is often the case, was just. The count was married. Poor, lovely countess! But as it is tedious to relate a story without the use of names, we will call her Countess Julia.

"It was here as everywhere else in this unhappy land; the man—a woman—and all manhood else repressed into the soul of wife and mother. Alas! how often, when I have wandered through the secluded streets of Milan, and seen the beautiful mother sitting in her doorway nursing her boy and gazing upon him

with an expression of unfathomable depth, has the unwelcome thought stolen upon me that surely this land is enveloped in deep night, in whose darkness evil fairies creep stealthily to the cradles of sleeping infants and confound their sex, or else suck the marrow from their bones.

"The count affected a loyal disposition, or perhaps indeed possessed it (who can read the heart of an Italian?), but Countess Julia was a Lombard from crown to foot. She detested everything German—the people, the manners, the language, and, above all, the soldiery.

"When she met me for the first time—and I shall never forget the meeting—she wore a white Indian shawl over a black satin dress, and the golden fringes of her mantilla shone about her like beams of light. She coldly surveyed me with that sentiment of superiority which knows no hate because the object is too contemptible.

"But she soon saw that I read her very soul, and, as she sat opposite me at table, her smiles were only masks. She now did me the honour to regard me as an enemy, and perhaps a vague foreboding stole over her heart that her haughty pride was to be humbled.

"Grievous days came apace; the heaviest of my life. My nights were sleepless, and I often felt as if my heart was compressed by a burning hand. Every moment was rife with strife.

"It was the Countess Julia's custom to bathe early of mornings in the lake. When she had reascended from the water she would walk to and fro in the avenue of wide-spreading trees, her loosened tresses still gleaming with pearly drops, and read some book, or else she would play at that graceful sport in which one throws a suspended ring over a hook fastened upon a tree.

"I beheld her even yet, as she used to stand there each morning, her lustrous black hair floating over her fluttering white mantle, as, with exquisite grace, she took perfect aim with the ring as if it were a bolt of love. She never missed, and when the ring would strike squarely over the hook, my heart—in perfect rhythm with every action—would bound and throb as if it too were struck.

"Then I would pass her by, and, saluting her feebly, would spring into one of the boats lying along the shore and row out into the lake. Bewitched and bewildered, I would steer to the spot where she had just bathed and gaze into the limpid blue depths as if I had thought to find her image there. When weary of the fruitless search I would throw myself back on the cushions of the boat and dip my hands over its sides in the cool morning tide, while a mystical influence flowed like a soothing opiate through my nerves and lulled me to sleep.

"Such was the morning. The day elapsed in such serenity as one feels when one must laugh and jest, though with burning pulse and aching heart; then came the evening. We reassembled in a summer salon through whose high open windows the lamp-light fell far out into the garden, whence were wafted to us zephyrs of delicious fragrance. The count and I played at chess, while the countess sat at her grand ebony piano and touched with her fair, taper fingers the magic keys. And, heavens, what playing! Now a soft murmuring and sighing, a sweetly pathetic weeping; the voluptuous languor of a gentle sorrow, with here and there the faintest ripple of a smile. Then suddenly a heart-rending sobbing and wailing, then wild, hysterical laughter, a piercing shriek of despair, a terrible tempest of grief. She was playing herself—her history, or the history of her country, I know not which. I have never since heard such soul-absorbing strains.

"At midnight she took a waxen taper and passed us, smiling, by. I could have prostrated myself before her and kissed the hem of her drapery. But the passion which made me weak also made me strong; I could endure anguish because I dared hope for bliss. She thought she perceived the distress of my heart, but had no certainty of it. What my eyes betrayed my whole conduct denied. At times a doubt of her triumph troubled her, and this disquiet was my consolation and my hope.

"Thus passed weeks, until one day we made an excursion to the mountains. Our vehicle was a light, open, one-horse phaeton, which hung so low on its springs that one could easily and safely jump from it at the sharpest trot. We were soon at our destination, and the pure mountain air blew gently about us like the breath of health. From one of the loftiest peaks I gazed down upon the blue lake and the magic carpet of its shores—a vision of enchantment! I felt as if a great burden had fallen from off me, and a wondrous calm came over me. My soul was at languid, blissful rest. The countess, too, had become tender; her mouth, at other times so proud and severe, now smiled as sweetly as Peace.

"It was late ere we thought of returning. Countess Julia took the reins, while the count and I reclined comfortably in the depths of the phaeton. We began the descent, and drove only as fast as a woman cares to drive. The full moon shone brightly upon our way, and the stillness of the night was broken only by the hoof-strokes of our horse. Here the road grew narrow as we came to a dense growth of laurel and cypress which extended down the side of the mountain for a good quarter of a mile, and reached as far as the park gate of our villa. Strong-bodied chestnut trees indicated for a long way the direction of the road as we drove faster and faster toward the valley. We were bowling along swiftly when suddenly a shot was heard. Our horse immediately reared up, plunged and fell. The phaeton stopped, and when the animal ceased his struggling, I sprang out in the road on the right side ere I had perceived from which direction the report had come.

"Then I beheld three brigands rushing toward me; one was armed with a long dirk, the other two with old horse-pistols. The former appeared the more resolute villain, and was in advance of his comrades; I cut him down with my sabre, at the same instant in which the other two scoundrels fired at me. They missed, and fled.

"The countess, who had also sprung from the phaeton, was now clinging to the back seat with her right arm, while the left hung limp from her shoulder, wounded and bleeding copiously. I flew to her assistance. As I did so, the brigands seized the opportunity, and turning quickly, lifted their wounded, loud-cursing comrade upon their shoulders, and disappeared in the thick undergrowth. All this was the work of a moment.

"The count sat motionless, pale, and trembling in his seat—a monument of terror.

"It was aimed at me," was all that passed his livid coward lips.

"And indeed his suspicion may have been not very far wrong, for his coquetting with our forces was known to his countrymen, and he was the object of universal hate and execration. It is probable that the attack of the villains was directed against his life only; nevertheless, I was so heartily disgusted with the cowardice of the man who could forget all else in his own danger that, in spite of the delicious thrills which I felt in supporting his lovely countess, I contemptuously and harshly called to him to descend from his seat and render us his assistance.

"The countess had become deadly pale, and lay in a swoon in my arms. We bore her into a bower of myrtle and laurel, formed by nature's own sweet and cunning hand, and, procuring cushions from the phaeton, prepared a couch for her as best we could, the trunk of a cypress serving for support. As the swoon still continued, we ripped open her black silk dress, and my fears were dispelled. It was a flesh wound—little more than an abrasion of the skin. Seizing a white cambric fichu which she wore half concealed under her bodice, I folded it together and laid it tenderly upon the wound to stay its bleeding. It succeeded admirably, but the count either did not or would not perceive the action; for, gazing anxiously over the road whence he might expect another attack, he tremblingly cried:

"I'll go and fetch help."



[AT MIDNIGHT SHE TOOK A WAXEN TAPER, AND PASSED US, SMILING, EY.]

And without staying for my reply hurried toward the villa.

I was filled with unutterable contempt, and laughed at his palpable cowardice.

"Then my heart was filled with infinite compassion for the lovely woman who lay pale and insensible before me. Repressing desperately the feverish passion which for weeks had raged and surged through my veins, I now beheld calmly, but with inexpressible pain, her uncovered neck, over whose snowy whiteness trickled, from time to time, drops of blood. Oh, brutes, fiends, to have hurt her thus!

"Thus passed several minutes before she became conscious.

At last she arose, and passing her hand over her brow as if to collect her thoughts, inquired of me, with an expression of utter abandonment:

"Where is—"

"And said no more.

"I was about to answer her unfinished question, but she motioned with her hand, and I was silenced. There could be no doubt that she had penetrated her husband's poltroonery. A smile of most ineffable contempt played for a moment about her mouth; then suddenly becoming grave, almost solemn, she regarded me long and fixedly with her dark eyes, as if she would read my deepest soul, while their expression changed—slowly at first—then faster and faster—to one of flashing fierceness.

"She seemed to grow and tower aloft in the deep shadows of the forest, until I could almost fancy I beheld one of those wild pagan women of whom all the legends related to me in childhood came thronging in upon me. But this was for a moment only. She tore the kerchief from her wound and cast it upon the ground. Then throwing herself upon my breast, she kissed me with all the impetuosity of her warm southern nature, released from its icy captivity to an old, cowardly, most unworthy, unappreciative master. Tears gushed from her dark, tender eyes. My tranquility was gone! Infinite, triumphal joy

surged over me. Every consideration of danger fell away like withered boughs when spring is come, and I felt nothing, nothing but the full, wild beating of her heart against my own. We gazed upon each other rapturously. I felt as if I were bathing in a sea of fragrance and harmonious feeling whose waves beat melodiously around me. What can I say more?

"And were it again as it was, it might be again as then.

"When I awoke, torchlights were flashing through the woods. The eyes of the countess beamed upon me once more. Then hastily stooping she snatched the blood-stained fichu from the ground, and pressing it within my hand, she softly and sweetly murmured:

"You may take it, and wear it as a souvenir."

"I kissed her hand, and concealed the blood-stained memento close to my heart.

"The count greeted us coldly. Armed servants bore a litter, while two others carried torches. We then silently took up our march toward the villa.

"Morning came again. But no graceful, white-robed form with loosened tresses walked through the avenues of the garden. Evening came, but no waxen tapers burned upon the ebony piano, and no melodious, tremulous strains broke the mournful stillness of the salon.

"I inquired after the countess; she was gone—gone for weeks, perhaps for months. I have never seen her since; but her image I bear with me always, also the souvenir she gave me. Look, this is it!"

Hostowitz ceased. He unloosened the sash which he habitually wore tightly laced around his hips, and threw it before his auditors. Between the folds of the sash lay the fichu of the countess, with the stains of her blood still upon it.

(To be continued.)

#### CURIOUS CASE OF SPECTRAL ILLUSION.

HAPPENING, on a very recent visit to the country, to be in company with a Mrs. D., the phenomena of spectral illusion chanced to be mentioned. Mrs. D. took an especial interest in the discussion, as she had experienced some curious illusions. She gave such a pointed and clear account of both as we should expect from a well-educated, intelligent and truthful woman. In her waking hours, this lady was literally tortured with horrid faces glaring at her, and approaching close to her in every possible aggravation of horror. She was making a tedious recovery in child-bed when these symptoms troubled her. Besides the forms, which were of natural colour, though often bloody, she was perplexed by their variation in size, from colossal to minute. Mrs. D. saw also entire human figures, but they were always as minute as pins, or even pinheads, and were in great confusion and numbers, indicating morbid action of order and number. Like Mr. John Hunter, and the opium-eater, too, Mrs. D. had illusive perceptions in that function of weight which gives the perception of equilibrium a just relation to gravitation. She was dreadfully annoyed with the sensation of descending without the means of stopping. The opium-eater experienced falling as if for millions of miles, and considered that illusion the most insupportable of the many ones which punished the insane debauchery of his pernicious habit. The only other illusion suffered by Mrs. D. was flashing light, showing over-excited colouring. The illusion did not, in her case, present entire spectres, recognisable as known individuals; but, like the opium-eater, were visitations of what they call "the tyranny of the human face." Mrs. D. describes the pain which accompanied her illusions, viz.: acute pain in the upper part or root of the nose, the seat of the organ of form, and all along the eye-brows.





["LOWER YOUR WEAPON, DON ALONZO," CRIED THE GIRL, SEIZING HIS ARM.]

## APRIL FOOLS.

### CHAPTER VII.

SHE left me, going back to the scrap of embroidery. Contentedly, my eyes dwelt upon the grand lines of her superb form and the perfect contour of her small head, upon the rare combination of voluptuous and intellectual beauty the tout ensemble presented.

It did not occur to me my province was to commence a conversation, that the white fingers were only playing at work whilst she waited for some opening remark.

"You speak Spanish, senor?"

"Indifferently, senorita—not well enough to thank you as I could wish for the care and hospitality which have saved my life."

"Your thanks are too warm. We have but bestowed the aid that any Christian might claim."

"Perhaps, senorita, you do not know that I am an Ingles and a heretic?"

At the word "heretic" I noticed she made the sign of the cross, looking up hurriedly from the embroidery.

"Senor, your words are humble, but your tone is haughty, defiant. Of country and of faith you are alike proud. Is it not so?"

"Of country, yes; of faith, sometimes. But it seems to me, senorita, we Protestants are not stirred to your fervour of worship. Believe me, I respect that which I cannot share."

"I say, Hardwick, ask the young lady where the old buffer is—the master of the establishment, you know."

"Doncella, my friend inquires for your father."

"Ay, de mi! he is dead. I have neither father nor mother, senor."

I bit my lips. It was evident that I had aroused painful emotions.

Then came another thought; if those natural

guardians were dead, who had taken their place? Was she married?

Pangs of a vague, unreasoning jealousy tortured me. The olive face, in spite of its passionate southern beauty, was that of a young girl, about nineteen perhaps, but the grand bust bespoke nature and developed womanhood. Had this glorious exotic, without the possession of which I felt life must henceforth be incomplete, been plucked by another hand?

"You turn pale, senora—you are agitated. Here is wine."

With her own fair hands she brought it—a Hebe whom Jupiter might have coveted. In the radiance of the divine compassion with which she regarded me I felt ashamed, as though the infatuation she inspired were a guilty one. But this suspense was terrible; I must know the worst.

"You are too kind. I am grateful, senorita, and my gratitude is due to another as well as to yourself—the dueno, the master of the house."

"My uncle? You must reserve its expression for a day or two yet till he return from a journey to a seaport town."

Oh, bliss! A day or two in that charming companionship—a day or two of uninterrupted tête-à-têtes, for Bardolf could neither understand nor join in the conversation, save by the clumsy method of having everything interpreted.

"Well?" said that young gentleman, inquiringly.

"She lives with her uncle, who is away on a journey. He will be back in a day or two."

"Humph! Highly delighted he will be I daresay to find his hacienda turned into a hospital and his niece acting as head nurse. Well, it is slow work to hear you people jabber unintelligible gibberish. I shall take a stroll, explore the place, and decide whether or not to make up to the young lady. Ta, ta! senorita, with a profound bow. "Adios! for the present. Au revoir, you know."

"Where is he going?"

"Merely for a stroll, senorita."

"Ah! he feels the inaction, and you also, with-

out doubt. Would that you could accompany him, senor!"

"An unkind speech, senorita, and hard to bear, for I cannot relieve you of my presence."

"Nay, nay! you misconstrue the words. It is not that I would lose the company of my guest. It is a pleasant relief from uniform dullness. But you, a dweller in towns, must find this sojourn unbearable."

"Not if I may be near you, senorita. I shall grow well and strong too quickly, nourished by perfect happiness."

One searching glance from orbs of liquid darkness, and she laughed lightly.

"Aha! from the dweller in towns how smoothly glides the language of polished compliment! Senor, we country maidens have the bad taste to prefer—the truth."

"It is God's truth, senorita. I swear it."

Again the careless laugh offended my ear.

"Ha! ha! How fluently roll the vows! How many ladies—your countrywomen—or the belles of Menisco, have hearkened to the like? How often have you thus perjured yourself, cavalero?"

"Never," said I, gloomily. "I am no lover of woman's society; no squire of dames."

"Discourteous, and I daresay untrue. Could secrets be revealed, perhaps a woman would be found at the bottom of your present predicament."

Behind the assumed carelessness of the remark there was something—strong curiosity perhaps, and searching scrutiny, as though she would read my innermost thoughts. The abrupt turn of the conversation disconcerted me.

There was in one sense a woman at the bottom of this scrape, and awkward embarrassment must have been written on my face. I felt her suspicions were confirmed, yet how could I explain them away without exciting that which would be most fatal to my indefinite hopes—namely, ridicule?

Confronted with so awkward a dilemma I stammered out an avowal somewhat foreign to the point at issue.

"There is but one woman in the world for whose sweet sake I would gladly suffer wounds and brave death."

A slight uprising of the queenly head, a slight hardening of the beautiful features, over which a mocking smile was yet playing.

"Ah! this lady of your love is far away, perhaps, in the little island about which you English rave."

"No, senorita."

"At Menisco, then? Tell me her name, that she may be my guest, to tend you, nurse you, bring you back to health. Have you loved her long?"

"A few days only, and she does not live at Menisco. Would that I dared tell you her name!"

"Carrambo! I shall not thrust you through the back, as some person seems to have done, in consequence of indiscreet disclosures, possibly. Your lesson has been a severe one, senor, but it makes you unduly cautious."

The tone was piqued and resentful. Could it be possible that jealousy was the cause? Theoretically I knew the proneness of the sex to rivalry.

It was not impossible that this lovely girl, who had certainly hovered round my presumably insensible lips, might feel aggrieved at the phantom of her own creation.

"I was stabbed by a brigand, one of the band of the notorious Don Alonso de Fratas. You have heard of him probably. He—"

I stopped. At the name of the bandit Donna Inez started violently, and her agitation appeared to increase. Perhaps my look of wonder compelled a partial explanation.

"I know him, senor, well. He and—my uncle are fast friends."

This, then, was the secret of her emotion. Don Alonso was the friend of the family, and as a matter of course her lover. It would be impossible, I argued, for any man to gaze often upon such peerless charms without feeling their magnetism, least of all for a sensualist of his known character.

He might have disguised the latter. Handsome, young, well educated, boasting the address and manners of a gentleman, he might have gained her young affections.

With savage delight I reflected that Bardolf's "toothache mixture" had sent the villain to his last account, but in the same breath I remembered the necessity of suppressing that fact. To have instigated the poisoning of the young lady's lover would hardly be a passport to her favour.

In short, I was in what Bertie would have called a "fix." Head over heels in love with this adorable olive-skinned maiden, I had blunderingly led her to suspect an intrigue with another fair one, and had directed her thoughts to a rival whom it were well she should forget.

In stammering perplexity I was framing a reply which would probably have complicated matters still more, when there rose a sound of hurrying feet, and Bardolf, breathless, excited, burst into the room.

"Hardwick, that ruffian, Don Alonso, is alive and kicking!—kicking at the great door to be let in! Listen!"

"What does he say, senor?"

"Don Alonso is demanding admission, senorita."

She turned pale as death; with long, white fingers clasped upon her breast, she looked about her like one who is stupefied by a sudden blow, and, recovering with a terrible effort, she clutched at my arm, and cried in a paroxysm of terror:

"You must fly!"

"Too late, senorita, even had I the strength. He is here!"

"On! conceal yourselves—behind the tapestry—quick!"

It was the only hiding-place, but a better could hardly be found. Pushing Bardolf before me with more strength than I had believed myself to possess, I lifted the folds and took up such a position that I could both hear and see all that passed within the room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

He stood in the doorway, bowing—his face pale, and somewhat haggard.

"Donna Inez, I trust my visit may not be intrusive. I had hoped to find your uncle at home."

"My uncle's friend is entitled to a welcome from his niece, Don Alonso."

"But such a welcome, given solely for the uncle's sake, would hardly content him. Have you not one to bestow on your own account, senorita?"

"That depends upon your errand, senor."

"My errand is—ostensibly—business with Don Pedro."

"I expect he will not return till the day after to-morrow."

"But, ACTUALLY, to bask in your smiles or wither in your frown, sweet Inez."

Donna Inez laughed gaily, but with a note in her mirth which sounded a little forced.

"Then you must WITHDRAW, unless you will accept my sweetest smile as a bribe to withdraw at once. It is not fitting a maiden should receive you in her uncle's absence, senor. The visit compromises her. Pray—pray leave me!"

In response to this appeal, the Mexican coolly walked to the couch upon which she sat, and placed himself by her side, trying gently to possess himself of the white, slender fingers still busy with the embroidery. They evaded his touch, but in my fanciful jealousy I fancied the position was not unpleasing to the lady.

"Senorita, we are far, very far, from the world of wagging tongues and slanderous misstatements. Save old Margarita, the housekeeper, and a few peons, no living soul is within miles of us. We exist in seclusion, which is the very atmosphere of love. Banish me, and that seclusion becomes a loveless, miserable solitude—a change for the worse."

She shook her head, playfully.

"If you will leave me I will try to welcome you another day," she murmured.

The Mexican's eyes glowed with unholly fire. In the ardent gaze with which he devoured the loveliness of that matchless face I could read the strength of his passion, whilst yet he kept careful watch over every word not to frighten the beautiful bird he was trying to ensnare.

"Senorita, be not so cruel. I am weak, tired, faint. For three days I have lain at death's door. I have been poisoned."

"Poisoned?"

"Carral! yes, by dogs of Englishmen whom I had captured, and for whom I demanded ransom."

"But why capture them, mio capitan?"

"In the interests of religion and morality, senorita. They had assignments—both—a man of five-and-twenty and a boy ten years younger, with nuns of the Convent of the Capuchins."

"Ah!" sighed Donna Inez; and then, seeing him about to speak, she added, haughtily, "You may spare me the details."

"Well, it is not often I have the opportunity to serve Holy Mother Church, and fill my own pockets at the same time. I seized these Englishmen, disguised—the profligates—in woman's attire, and constituting myself the judge of their offence, I condemned them to pay, jointly, six thousand piastres. One of them made a desperate attempt to escape. He left his marks upon me, you perceive"—and the brigand pointed to his broken head—"but the knife of one of my faithful followers drank his life-blood—most of it, that is. But, senora, such incidents are hardly fit for a lady's ear."

"Continue, I am interested."

"The Englishman idled like a pig. I feared he would die too easily. I had his wounds bound up. I caused him to drink and eat. I tended him like a brother, ere I broke my own fast. And that is all."

"How, all?"

"Having at length begun to satisfy my own hunger I became unconscious. It was night when I awoke. I rose, stumbled over a body on the floor, groped as best I could for means of illumination. When I procured them, two of my men lay on the floor, dead. One had been shot

in the struggle, as I remembered, though my head was in such a whirl I could scarcely remember anything. The other had been drugged to death by the food of which we had, alike, partaken. I ate less heartily, or I should have shared the same fate."

"It is very terrible," said Donna Inez, shudderingly, covering her face with her hands as though to shut out the picture his words drew.

"Does it move you to pity, dear doncella," cried the Mexican, eagerly. "Then my sufferings are awfully recompensed. A little pity, a little love—give me these, with the hand your uncle has promised, and we will leave this land of lawlessness, violence and bloodshed, to commence, in another hemisphere, another existence. At this moment, doubtless, Don Pedro has made arrangements for our transport, and in less than a week everything may be arranged. Carrambo! what is that? Someone hides behind the tapestry!"

From the moment of our concealment, and of Don Alonso's entrance, I had steadied myself by grasping the hanging folds—partly to sustain my own scanty strength, tried by the upright motionless position, and partly that I might observe all that passed through as small an aperture as possible.

Whilst the Mexican made his appeal for a little pity, a little love, he tried to possess himself of the lady's hands, and in the savage eagerness with which I watched the attempt, I leaned forward, allowing much of my weight to depend upon staff centuries old, perhaps, and greatly moth-eaten. The imprudence was followed by an audible tear at the top where the rings were attached, hence the brigand's exclamation. "We were discovered!"

"Come forth!" he shouted, cocking a pistol. "Ten thousand curses! Aha, senorita! This explains your fastidiousness about receiving my visits in the absence of your uncle."

"Lower your weapon, Don Alonso," cried the girl, seizing his arm; and at the same instant I parted the tapestry and stood before him, followed by Bardolf.

"Senors, I salute you. This is too great a happiness," exclaimed the brigand, bowing with an ironical smile, but with a ferocious glitter in his cruel eyes. "May I demand an explanation of this denouement?"

"I will supply one," said Donna Inez. "This gentleman" (pointing to me) "was brought here by my peons, four days ago. They thought he was dead, but his pulse beat feebly and he revived. Until to-day, he was too weak to leave the bed on which they laid him. Not an hour ago he tottered into the room to thank me for the poor hospitality I had been able to afford, and just as he had told me his wound was inflicted by one of your band, the voice of Alonso de Fratas demanded admission. He was too weak to fly—he had no weapons wherewith to defend himself—I urged him to hide."

"A proposition with which he complied with alacrity, I doubt not. Senors, you are again my prisoners. I charge you with the wilful murder of my poisoned comrade, and the attempted murder of my wounded self. I am not sure it is wise to defer judgment and execution, even in deference to a lady's prayer. Nevertheless, Donna Inez, your imploring looks compel a foolish clemency."

"You will spare their lives?"

"I will punish them both," cried the brigand, with gloomy malevolence, "in the way I had intended to reward Senor Hardwick's playful attack, of which these are the marks" (touching his head). "Gentlemen, I will trouble you to precede me from the room. He who attempts escape will be shot down without mercy."

"Shall I try a dash at him?" whispered Bardolf.

"No, dear boy. We must wait and hope."

Followed closely by the brigand, we passed into the entrance-hall.

"Margarita! Rita!" he shouted.

We heard shuffling feet upon the flags, and presently an ugly old Indian crone appeared.

"A lighted lamp, Margarita. Quick!"

"Si, senor."



"And a big roll of maize-bread and a big jug of pulque. Do you hear?"

"Si, senor." The striped shirt and black bodice of the old woman vanished round a corner. A few seconds, and she returned with the articles required.

"Lead on, Margarita, to the souterrain." "Not there, Don Alonzo!" cried Donna Inez. "Santissima Maria! not there!"

"Senorita, if you know of a safer prison, I shall be glad to entertain your objection."

The saturnine enser upon his dark features was unanswerable. Preceded by the old woman, who bore a common stove lamp, we descended a flight of stairs, and found ourselves in a long, arched passage. It must have led some distance beyond the walls of the hacienda, and it terminated in two cells—one being closed apparently with a door of solid iron, the other with a grating of iron bars about three inches apart, and each double the thickness of a man's thumb.

The air was damp and chill; a peculiar and unpleasant smell saluted the nostrils.

The brigand, never removing his eagerly watchful eyes from our persons, took two keys from his pocket, and applied one of them to the lock of the grating. It yielded, and swung back.

"I fear, Senor Hardwick," said he, politely, "your new quarters may not be quite so pleasant as the old ones. You will enjoy, however, perfect quiet, profound repose, regular diet, and freedom from the excitement of female society. I have the honour to offer my best wishes for your speedy restoration to health, that you may fully enjoy the pleasing fate which awaits you. Enter!"

The suppressed and diabolical glee with which the innuendo was spoken was more fearfully impressive than any open reference to the monster's scheme of revenge. I knew the character of the man too well to hope for mercy. I knew also that the presence of the girl he professed to love would not have prevented him from shooting me on the spot, had he entertained the slightest doubt of ability to carry out his original intention—to flay me alive. And now poor Bertie was doomed to the torture also.

The grating closed behind us, the key was turned in the lock, the roll of maize bread and the jug of pulque were handed through a tiny door just large enough to admit them, made to slide back. Doubtless the cell had been fitted up as a place of confinement, and used as such for years. How many tragedies, I wondered, had been enacted within these walls. Would it be the scene of that final act of vengeance, wherewith the ruffian proposed to gratify his fiendish soul ere he sailed, with his promised bride, to commence in another hemisphere another existence?

"Come, sweet doncella," said the brigand, "let us return to light and love. Margarita, escort us to the hall. Afterwards, you may take the lamp to the prisoners; it will last them just long enough to make acquaintance with their abode. Every day you will replenish the jug of pulque, and supply another loaf of yellow bread. Do you understand?"

"Si, senor."

"Senor Hardwick, if a friend may presume to offer advice, you will guard well the long loaf—I believe there are a few rats to dispute its possession. Adios!"

The glimmer of the lamp grew feeble, the footsteps died away in the distance, there was no sound, save Bardolf's breathing and a scurrying to and fro upon the floor. I clung to the iron railings for support, for I was very weak. I laid my head upon my arm and groaned aloud.

My thoughts were terrible, and I vainly strove to escape from them. All the stories I had ever read in my boyhood of Indian tortures at the stake seemed to come back to me, and would not be driven away.

## CHAPTER IX.

"Cheer up, old man," said Bardolf. "Whilst there is life there is hope."

Bless the boy! he was braver far than I. Throughout, he had borne danger and suffering in a way that put me to the blush. Something of this I said, in broken sentences.

"Rubbish!" cried he. "Tell you what, old fellow, with loss of blood and want of strength, you are hardly yourself, you know. In a day or two you will pick up a bit. Then we will find some means to get out of this den. Oh! here is the old hag with two lanterns. By Jove! she looks as though she had seen a ghost."

In truth, Margarita did look intensely frightened. Her dusky visage was some shades lighter by reason of her terror. Her oblique eyes glanced first over one shoulder, then over the other. Her few yellow teeth chattered in her head. With trembling fingers she thrust one of the lamps through the grating.

"Gracias, Margarita, what do you fear?"

"The spirits. Six of them, senor, all slain—all slain."

"Stop! Margarita—good Margarita, here. Curse the old witch!"

Margarita had retreated, shambling off almost at a run. So hastily that the extra lamp she had brought, evidently because she dared not encounter the supernatural horrors of the passage in darkness, flickered and went out. A scream followed its extinction, the noise of her steps became less audible, then ceased. She had got back to daylight in spite of "the spirits," and probably nothing short of the brigand's command (a yet more fearful thing) would induce her face them again.

"Let us explore!" cried Bardolf, holding the lamp above his head. "The place is dry, that is something to be thankful for."

It was dry, as he said. The floor, walls, ceiling, were of rough burnt bricks, very hard. There was no window, but on the side adjoining the cell guarded by the iron door, and higher than I could reach, standing on tip-toe, was an aperture fenced with iron bars, the same thickness as those of the grating. In a corner lay a heap of straw. Furniture of any kind there was none.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bardolf, "what is this? Shouldn't wonder if it leads to the dining-room, since we appear to be in the sleeping apartment."

He lowered the lamp, holding it so as to illuminate a hole knocked clumsily through the wall, just opposite the barred aperture, but close to the floor, and only large enough to admit the passage of one person, stooping almost double, at a time.

"I will go first," said he. "Then you can hand me the light and follow."

"Be careful, dear boy. Make sure of your footing before you take a step. This may be a trap."

Holding by the wall, Bardolf sank upon one foot, and thrust the other before him along the ground.

"By Jove!" he cried, "it's a lucky thing you cautioned me, Hardwick. There is a big hole, or something."

"Drop on all fours, and hold the lamp before you," I suggested.

He did so. The scrutiny lasted but a few seconds. He drew back trembling, with a look such as I trust I may never see again, stamped upon any human countenance.

"Hardwick," he said, and the voice, so different to his ordinary frank, fearless tones, startled me, "Hardwick, in dear old England, whose cliffs we shall never see again, you must have heard the expression, 'standing with one foot in his grave.'"

"Yes—yes."

"That was my position just now. Take the lamp and look, but for God's sake be careful."

He drew back, and I crept into his place. Thrusting the lamp through the hole, holding it, clear of the wall, as high above my head as I possibly could, I gazed around.

A cell about seven feet square. The ceiling

and walls of rough burnt bricks, similar to those on which I knelt. What could there be in such a sight to move brave Bertie to terror, and to cause drops of perspiration to stand out upon my brow?

"The cell had no floor—no bottom."

It was an oubliette, a roofed well, on the verge of which I knelt, into the dark profound of which I gazed with shrinking horror. No sight could so have curdled our blood as did that dread abyss—that awful blackness, with its silence, its mystery, its terrible secrets, unburied yet veiled.

I understood now the meaning of Donna Inez crying, "Not there—Santissima Maria!—not there!" Doubtless she had explored the souterrain. Possibly she had been cognisant of murders committed in that outer chamber, and instantly effaced beyond possibility of human knowledge. What did the old hag say?

"Six of them, senor, all slain—all slain."

What could be more easy? A shot—a thrust—a body dragged to the hole in the wall—a hush—effacement. With fingers that would tremble a little, I fumbled at a stone in the wall, until I pulled it out of the brick in which it was imbedded.

"Bertie, listen!"

I dropped the stone. I felt my heart throb—throb—throb many times. Then, from far down, ascended a faint thud.

"Hardwick—Hardwick, come away!" cried the boy, plucking at my coat; and with a shudder I obeyed.

The lamp still burned steadily. Shaking it, I calculated there was oil enough to last us at least an hour. We made a fresh survey of the chamber.

There was nothing to be learned. We kicked the walls by way of sounding them. They were solid; nothing short of a pickaxe could be used upon them with the slightest effect.

We shook the grating, examined the lock, tried the strength of the bars; alas! the cage was infinitely too strong to show the slightest signs of yielding. Finally, we sat down upon the straw, to think.

"Blow out the lamp, Bertie," said I; "we can talk and plan in the dark as well as in the light, and later on we may require illumination."

"Have you matches?"

"No; but you always carry them, do you not?"

"I have none in these borrowed garments. We must just let the oil burn away," cried the boy, despondingly, "and with the last flicker take the last look at each other, maybe. Hardwick, suppose old Margarita fail to bring food and drink. Likely enough, seeing how the passage frightens her."

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," said I, lugubriously.

"Ay, and a jolly sight more than sufficient," grumbled Bardolf.

My calculation proved correct. In little more than an hour the lamp went out. We shook hands solemnly at that extinction—it seemed a fearful omen.

We huddled together for warmth and companionship, upon the straw. Presently we felt animals running by ones and twos over our legs—the rats had come to enliven us.

We lay still, in Egyptian darkness and in silence. We heard the rats scampering up and down the passage outside, and through or under the gratings. I thought of Bishop Hatto's frightful fate, and then solicitude respecting my own passed. I was picturing the interview in the court.

"Good Heavens! could my beautiful divinity—the 'angel' of my sick fancy—the peerless brunette whom I worshipped with strength and fervour altogether involuntary—whom I had loved from the first moment I beheld her—be the affianced bride of this brutal outlaw? His words would seem to prove it. He spoke of her uncle's promise, and she did not disclaim it. Her demeanour had been cold, certainly, but the coldness might spring from coquetry, or from consciousness of espionage, or from em-

barrament of receiving a lover whilst the dueno was absent."

How were the fond couple amusing themselves at that instant? Exchanging caresses—whispering soft nothings to each other, billing and cooing, laughing now and then at the poor wretches in the cell below?

"Do you think it is late, Hardwick?"

"Heaven alone knows, dear boy. Day and night are alike here."

"Well, I vote we sup as heartily as possible, to keep strength and spirits. If we do not eat the yellow bread the rats will."

"Very well, can you not say grace, Bardolf?" I am afraid we think too little of that ceremony in a general way."

"For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful!" murmured Bertie.

"Amen!" said I, with equal fervour. "Now, Bardolf, help yourself, and hand it over."

"Hand what over?" asked my companion, as our two empty groping hands touched each other in the darkness.

"Why, the maize-bread, to be sure."

"You took charge of the roll," quoth Bardolf.

"Pardon me, I left it in your care."

A heavy sigh was the response, and an answering echo arose from my own chest. Further explanations were not necessary. We thought of those scurrying rats, and held our peace.

"Hardwick," said the boy, presently, when we had ruminated awhile, and discovered that we were very, very hungry; "Hardwick, shall it be 'grace after meat' next time?"

We slept, a slumber broken, uneasy—but protracted. Occasionally a grand steepchase of rats, with the straw whereon we lay as a racecourse, and our limbs as hurdles, would awaken us; occasionally a dream, in which threatening danger impelled a wild struggle of resistance, would bring about plungings, kicks, and brandishing of arms, to the effectual arousing, not only of the dreamer, but also of his luckless bedfellow.

At such times we would sit up, speculate upon the number of hours that had elapsed since our incarceration, and drop off to sleep again.

Elaborate calculations convinced us it must be about noon of the day succeeding our imprisonment, but into that accursed den the bright, free sunshine had never penetrated, and we had no means of verifying our conclusions.

Margarita had not appeared—the pangs of hunger were added to those of doleful suspense—and not a sound broke the stillness save the scratching and the racing of creatures whose sharp teeth might lend a new horror to approaching dissolution, if we were kept without food until instinct should tell them they might safely attack us.

Bardolf's regular breathing proclaimed he had found a brief respite from his trouble, and I was just nodding off also, when a thrilling whisper startled me into strained wakefulness.

"Senor! Senor Hardwick!"

For the moment, I could not answer, the summons was so unexpected, and that mysterious whisper sounded so strange and uncanny.

"For amor Dias, cavallero! Speak!"

I sprang up, stepped over Bardolf's prostrate body, and made for the grating.

"Donna Inez, can it be you?"

"Si, senor. I would have come before, but that I deemed it more prudent to wait till midnight."

Midnight! Was it possible so few hours had elapsed? Then the darkness and the inaction had quadrupled their length.

"Are you not afraid, senorita?"

I had reached the grating, and as I bent to listen for the answer I felt her breath upon my cheek.

"Not for myself, senor. My fears are for you."

What an egregious fool is a man in love? At that whispered response, I, Cyril Hardwick, shut up in a vault fearful almost as a charnel-house, and menaced with death by the most

diabolical torture imagination can conceive, felt positively happy.

"Do you know the nature of the revenge Don Alonzo promises himself?" she continued, earnestly. "Oh, I dare not tell; to dwell upon such a prospect might drive you mad!"

"I believe, senorita, his amiable programme embraces the slaying us both alive."

"Ah! you mock! you are not dismayed?"

"Donna Inez, my mind has been sadly occupied with a more terrible fear."

"Dios de mi alma! What is it?"

"That the villain has gained your love," said I, sternly.

There was a long moment of silence—silence that might be pregnant with an agonising admission, which her kind heart sought to make gently.

I caught hold of the iron bars as though their stubborn inflexibility might nerve me to bear the worst.

"Senor, I hate him!"

The words were uttered in a vehement, sibilant whisper, the energy of which carried conviction, even to my jealous heart. But it was so sweet to hear that avowal, I affected still to doubt.

"But he claims your hand. He speaks of a promise."

"Given by my uncle, senor; never by me."

"He visits you in Don Pedro's absence. He dares to address you in language of impassioned affection. All this afternoon, till late to-night, perhaps, he has not left your side. The hours have flown swiftly, doubtless, with love, laughter, dalliance—"

"Carrambo! senor, this is too much. I will leave you till you grow more generous."

"Forgive me! Ah! forgive me, my queen! my beautiful, peerless, dark-browed queen!"

"Hush! hush! If he should hear!"

"Ah, indeed! It would hasten the final tragedy, probably. So much the better. I am careless of life, Donna Inez, because since I learned your betrothal to him it has been valueless. I love you, senorita, with a Spaniard's passion, with an Englishman's obstinacy, with a monomaniac's fixity. I am mad, perhaps. Pity the madness, sweet doncella. Give me your hands to kiss—stretch them to me through the iron bars to where mine grope in the darkness."

"Will the hands content you, senor?"

So faint was the whisper, the air which bore it could hardly have trembled at its burden; so near was the whisper, the dear lips from which it proceeded touched my cheek.

"Inez, dear Inez, do not shrink from me. I cannot draw you to me, darling. I can only hold your soft hands—press my forehead against the cold grate—pray that your tender lips may come back again to rest on mine. Then I shall be content."

And there, in the moist, sepulchral atmosphere of the souterrain, forgetful of wounds, weakness, impending torture and death, with cheeks glued to the cold iron, but unconscious of its chill, I drank from that fountain of love which once at least in each man's life yields him a draught of godlike happiness.

## CHAPTER X.

"THEN you do not love him—this handsome captain of thieves—this Don Alonzo de Fratas?"

"Senor, I hate his very name. At his touch I shudder, as though the hand were a serpent's fang."

"He has dared to lay hands on you!—the accursed villain!"

"Peace, peace! Can you be jealous still whilst I am so near—so near?"

"Dear Inez, I know his character—a libertine of the deepest dye. His touch is profanation."

"Senor, instinct has told me so much. But he professes an honourable passion; my uncle has promised him my hand. Ay-de-mi! they have dark secrets; it is a partnership of guilt, which they would compel me to share."

"Then he has not insulted you to-day?"

"Had he insulted me I should not be here to tell the tale," said the girl, proudly. "I carry in my bosom a knife which would be sheathed in his heart, or in my own. Here is a weapon for you—a pistol, loaded by my hand; you may stake life on its not missing fire. I bring you also food, wine, a lamp, matches, a file. Take them, for I must go. You will be able, probably, to cut through the bars before morning, but do not leave till I summon you."

"Is there no duplicate key to this door?"

"Yes, but my uncle retains it. Loose my hands and let me go. Don Alonzo might take a fancy to visit his prisoners, and it is essential he should imagine me indifferent to their fate. Senor, I pray you, let me go!"

"Senor! That is too formal for farewell. Take your hands, Donna Inez. Adios!"

"Senor, you reproach me. If the title be formal you may teach me another some day. Meanwhile, what of the lips that speak it? Are they cold? Good night—good night, my beloved!"

One more draught from love's fountain, and she departed, gliding away as noiselessly as she had come.

I struck a match and applied it to the wick. Bardolf sat up, rubbing his eyes in amazement at my armful of treasures—a flask of Paso wine, the best part of a wild turkey, wrapped in a napkin and considerably squeezed by its passage between the bars, and, best of all, a three-cornered file, quite new.

"Hullo, Hardwick! Is that Aladdin's lamp? Who gave you those things—the genie?"

"An angel," said I, with enthusiasm.

"An angel, eh? The old miracles over again. I thought the age of such things had gone by. Hand over the wine, that I may drink the angel's health. What queer noises spirits make, do they not?—almost like an osculatory performance going on."

"You young scamp!" said I, "you shall have no turkey. Who let the rats eat our supper?"

Time was precious and our appetites were keen. Half the fowl quickly disappeared; the remainder, after brief consultation, was wrapped again in the napkin, and thrust for safety's sake into Bardolf's breast, giving him the appearance of a magnificent pouter pigeon, though of unknown plumage.

We inspected the grating. The lock was strong and unapproachable, save by immense labour. Our hearts sank within us. How many hours might we hope to work without discovery?

"Try the hinges," suggested Bertie, with a flash of inspiration.

It was a brilliant idea. The grating hung upon two thick iron supports, embedded in the solid masonry. Between the former and the latter there was ample room for a file to work. It had but to eat through these supports and we should be free.

We set to work cautiously, lest Don Alonzo might by some mischance hear us. Relieving each other we laboured incessantly until—oh, joy!—the heavy bars could be lifted forward or back. Our involuntary incarceration was ended.

"What is to be done now?" cried Bardolf.

"Nothing," said I. "Let us go to sleep."

"But we might wake Donna Inez, saddle the horse, ride off, and breakfast in Menisco."

"Or, rather, wake Don Alonzo and breakfast upon two leaden pills from my stolen revolver. That would be more probable. No, let us await him here. The young lady anticipated this success, and will present herself when the hour is ripe for action."

"A second celestial visit, with corresponding manifestations?" asked the boy, slyly.

Again I slept—a long, peaceful, dreamless slumber, from which I awoke, feeling better and stronger. There is no physician like happiness; I seemed to have drawn new life from the tender lips which had clung so fondly to my own.

Bardolf and I breakfasted on the remains of the turkey, and we had hardly finished when steps and voices were heard approaching. Great Heaven! if Don Alonzo's band had arrived we were lost after all. Hark!



"I tell you it is vain to prate of prudence, Don Pedro. I will flay that English devil alive if we miss the vessel by the delay. As for the boy, I am not anxious to torture him; you may fling him down the well, if you like. Risk? Ha! ha! Carrai! You should know well that the oubliette is a trusty friend and reveals no secrets. Here we are."

They stopped before the grating, each man holding a lamp on high. Would they discover our handiwork? I stepped forward, hoping to engage undivided attention, but holding Donna Inez's pistol on full cock behind me, prepared for instant action in case of emergency.

"Intercede for us, Don Pedro. We ask but to be set free."

"Nay, nay, I meddle not," said the person addressed. "Since Don Alonzo has lodged you in this apartment you have learned too much for me to desire that you should ever leave it."

"But surely your voice was interceding in our behalf just now."

"True. I recommended a bullet as a safe and speedy termination to your sufferings."

The unfeeling remark was accompanied by a hideous grin. I looked from one countenance to the other, and thought the unholy, mirthful exultation of the younger man less repulsive than the cold-blooded cackling of the grey-haired villain. They were worthy partners in crime.

As the keepers of a menagerie might gaze upon caged wild beasts the two men stood looking at us, discussing their affairs the while, with no more reticence than they would have observed before brutes. It was a startling proof of their belief in our utter impotence. In their eyes we were already dead.

"When does the ship sail?" asked Don Alonzo.

"The fourth day from this. I have taken berths. When do you propose to conduct your amiable surgical experiment upon our friend yonder?"

"The day after to-morrow will do. Meanwhile, we can pack the treasure in boxes."

"There are sufficient iron-bound chests in the safe to hold the lot, are there not?"

"I don't know. Let us examine; you have a key?"

Don Pedro produced it, a bright, heavy key, with wards of strong but intricate workmanship. He swung it carelessly to and fro on his finger in regular oscillations, like those of a pendulum.

"Better be ruled by me, and make an end of the Englishmen," he suggested, as coolly as though the proposal were to take some light refreshment. "A couple of steady shots through the bars and the thing would be done. Be advised!"

It was a moment of fearful suspense. The brigand's fingers played irresolutely with the trigger of my revolver. I stood like a statue, apparently desponding, really prepared to anticipate the shot, wrench open the grating, and attack Don Pedro ere he recovered from the surprise.

"Carrai! I will not," growled the Mexican, snatching the key from his accomplice, and stepping aside to insert it in the lock of the iron door adjoining. "I have sworn to exact a fearful revenge—I will keep the vow."

We heard the iron door swing back, and our foes disappeared. Should we emerge from confinement, shut to their door, and lock it? Probably Don Alonzo carried a duplicate key, and we should but delay them a few seconds.

"The barred aperture!" cried Bardolf. "Lean against the wall, Hardwick, and make a Jacob's ladder of yourself."

I followed instructions, and the boy scrambled nimbly to my shoulders. A painful twinge of my wounded back evoked a stifled groan, which I converted into an inquiry.

"What do you see?"

"A room double the size of this," whispered Bardolf. "There is a heavy wooden table in the centre; they are dragging it aside. They are pulling ropes out of a drawer—it is a pulley. There is a ladder in the corner. Don Pedro raises it in the middle of the room, holding it upright, whilst the brigand climbs, pulley in

hand. Now it is attached to the roof, I cannot see how. They are both hauling at the ropes, and something rises from the floor, like a trap-door. The ropes are taut as though fastened to the other side of this wall. By Jove! they have both disappeared—sunk into the earth."

"Then the time for action has arrived. Get down, Bertie. Gently, dear boy."

He slid to the ground. Noiselessly we lifted the grating and stepped into the passage. The door of the next cell was partly open, the key remaining in the lock. A thick rope was visible, securely fastened to iron stanchions. Cautiously I peeped round the corner of the door. The room was empty.

Empty, but in the centre opened a yawning pit, from which proceeded voices, and noises as of heavy articles being violently disturbed. Above the pit frowned a mass of iron, the immense lid of that safe of which they had spoken. Too heavy to be raised by any other means, it had been drawn up by the pulley, and it was kept in position, at a slope of about forty-five degrees, by the fastening of the pulley ropes to the iron stanchions. Our foes had entered the safe to pursue their investigations, and were probably bending over its treasures, for their heads were not visible.

At that moment swift thought bore me thousands of leagues away to a patch of turf in the garden of the dear old rectory—my boyhood's home. The season was winter, the time fifteen years earlier. Upon the turf, picking up occasional bread-crumbs, hopped a score of hungry birds—mavises, thrushes, sparrows, wrens. But the centre of attraction, to them and to me, was a structure of four bricks. Three formed an enclosure; the fourth, artfully propped at an angle of forty-five degrees, was supported by a twig, which gave way when a feathered felon, lured by the tempting display within the trap, alighted upon the crutch connected with it.

"Bertie," I whispered, "give me the knife with which we cut up the turkey."

Creeping along close by the wall, expecting every instant that a head would appear above the level of the floor, I drew the keen blade across the pulley-rope hard by the stanchions. The strands parted, the massive iron door, thus set at liberty, closed with a fall swift as that of the brick in childhood.

I saw Don Alonzo spring up with a fearful scream. He had barely time to clutch the edge of the safe with his hands, ere the door descended upon them, crushing the fingers, flesh and bone.

"Let us go," said Bertie.

The boy was pale as death. That first wild shriek had been enough to freeze the blood in one's veins; the muffled moans that succeeded it were yet more terrible. But it was no time for weak commiseration. It had been a choice of sacrifices—their lives or ours; and the wretches deserved the fate which must surely overtake them—death by suffocation. The struggles, however frantic, of half-a-dozen men in such a position, could not have raised that ponderous door.

I locked the cell and put the key in my pocket. In the cuarto I found Donna Inez, and hurried her away without explanation. In the stable we found three horses, and in as many hours I drew rein in the streets of Menisco, opposite the counting-house of Smith, Bardolf, and Perige.

A month later, the bodies of Don Alonzo and his companion in crime lay at the bottom of the oubliette, and I and my wife, together with two-thirds of the treasure found in the safe, were on our way to England. The remaining third had been turned into money, and remitted home to the credit of Bertie Bardolf, who will soon be a partner upon the strength of it.

I trust our (in one sense "ill-gotten") gains may not bring ill-luck. There were gold and silver plate, coins, precious stones, rubies, diamonds, chalices, altar cloths—the spoils of plundered churches as well as of plundered shops and haciendas. Restitution was impossible. Application to the government!—let any sane man who understands Mexican rule recommend it, and I will adopt his suggestion even now.

The mystery of the two notes which lured me and Bertie to a common rendezvous remains a mystery still. I do not doubt but that Don Alonzo, who spoke and wrote both Spanish and English with equal facility, was their author; his commonplace object being to capture the head clerk and the nephew of a great English house, and to extort a heavy ransom for their release.

That he should select as a trysting-place the Convent of the Capuchins, and that I, recognizing in the Plaza the face of a nun, should track her to that establishment, and should be led by a young man's vanity to half believe she was my anonymous correspondent, must have been a mere combination of fortuitous circumstances. I never saw her again.

I am a rich man, thanks to Don Alonzo de Fratas; and I have the dearest and queenliest lady for my wife whom it was ever my good fortune to meet. But when I think of the experiences which heralded my acquaintance with her, and fostered the sudden passionate love which matrimony has only consolidated, I breathe the fervent prayer, "Heaven preserve all friends of mine from ever being made APRIL FOOLS!"

THE END.

### I CAN'T DECIDE.

I CAN'T decide, I can't decide!  
And know not what to do;  
I'm so perplex'd, and teased, and tried,  
Between my suitors two.  
The charms of each I fairly scan,  
And weigh their merits well;  
But which must be the happy man  
Is more than I can tell.

I ponder on't, but cannot see  
Which way the odds incline;  
Sir William, he is twenty-three,  
Sir Paul is sixty-nine.  
'Tis three to one in point of age,  
And that's a difference wide;  
But hear me out, and I'll engage  
You'll say I can't decide.

I've thought it o'er from week to week;  
The odds may thus be told—  
Sir William has a blooming cheek,  
Sir Paul has bags of gold;  
Sir William's fair, well-shaped and tall,  
He has my heart, 'tis clear;  
But there's pin-money with Sir Paul,  
Three thousand pounds a year.

My choice unfixed between them floats;  
With equal claims they stand;  
This has a hand at tender notes,  
That tenders notes of hand.  
On either side they rise to view,  
'Tis quite perplexing still;  
HERE I see many a billet-doux,  
THERE dues on many a bill.

Sir William is a charming youth—  
So well he plays and sings;  
And then he vows eternal truth,  
And says such tender things.  
Sir Paul's a dull old stupid bore—  
The truth can't be denied;  
But who'd refuse a coach and four?  
Indeed I can't decide.

I can't decide—but hark! I hear  
Sir Paul, as I'm alive!  
"I said three thousand pounds a year,  
But now I'll make it five."  
Five thousand pounds! my stars! the die  
Is cast, and I'm your bride!  
Fate has ordained it, so I'll cry  
No more, "I can't decide!"

For the future all the railway stations at which Her Majesty alights or starts from will be safely kept from the intrusion of anybody except those of Her Majesty's Court, who have special licence to be present.

## THE HOUSEWIFE.

**COOKING LENTILS.**—To have the lentils really clean they must be hand-picked. After they have been picked perfectly clean (to ensure this being done we turn out the pint, or quart, or whatever quantity is required for immediate use, on to an open newspaper, and sort out the weed seeds from the lentils, putting the latter into a clean basin), we put them into a large dish and pour cold water on them, stirring them well the while; during this process any light seeds or chaff rise to the surface and can be poured off; the gritty dirt sinks to the bottom, therefore we take the lentils carefully out with a large spoon, putting them into another large clean dish. Again we wash them, this time with hot—almost boiling—water; stir them well about to free them from dirt, after which we allow the sand to settle to the bottom of the vessel, and, taking the lentils out once more with a large spoon, place them in boiling water in the pan in which they are to boil. All this may appear somewhat troublesome, but involves, in reality, only a few minutes' care, and the superior colour and flavour of the lentils are insured—ample compensation for those who take an interest in their work. To be thoroughly done, the lentils require from twenty minutes' to half an hour's boiling; when sufficiently tender, the surplus water may be strained from them, and some beef-tea or Liebig's Extract put to them; they should then be tossed over the fire for a few minutes, and dished perfectly hot. They may be eaten with meat or as a separate course, as is done by the French. When good beef-tea or any other good gravy is not handy, the lentils should not be strained quite dry, but have a little of the water left in. A lump, about as large as a walnut, of good salt butter may be put in the middle of them, and when melted, the lentils may be dished. Cooked in this manner, a quart of lentils costing sixpence makes a dish sufficient for six or seven persons; children, so far as our experience goes, like them exceedingly, and there is no doubt they form a more nutritious and more palatable food than our very popular pease pudding.

**YORKSHIRE PUDDING.**—Make a thin batter, as for frying, with a pint of milk and some flour; season with salt, pepper, and a little nutmeg grated fine. The batter should be perfectly smooth. Beat up the yolks of four eggs and the whites of two, and strain them into the batter. Beat it well with a fork for some minutes, then pour the mixture, to the thickness of an inch, into a tin, buttered freely, and put it into the oven. When the pudding is set, lay it in the tin, slanting, in front of the fire, under the beef which is roasting; and when the top is well browned, take the pudding out of the tin, and expose the under side of it to the action of the fire. When done, cut it up in diamond-shaped pieces, and garnish the joint with them.

**TAINTED GAME.**—Paying a visit some time since to a friend, we found the whole house invaded with a horrible stench. On inquiry, we were informed that a hare had just arrived from the country; but having been delayed upon the road it was found too far gone, and on skinning it the stench of which we complained had been produced. Orders had been given to throw the hare away; but we protested against such a thing, offering to render the present eatable. We immediately placed in a bucket upon the kitchen stair a quarter of a pound of chloride of lime mixed with two quarts of water. In ten minutes not a trace of the disagreeable smell remained in the house. Meanwhile we directed the cook to draw the hare and wash it in a mixture of chloride of soda and water bearing the proportions we have before specified. The success was complete, and the hare one of the finest we ever tasted. We now come to another anecdote. A medical friend of ours entering a poulterer's shop, one day, saw a brace of grouse about to be thrown away as unfit to be eaten. He directed that they should be sent to his house, and having washed them in the diluted chloride of soda as

above described, ordered one of them, when roasted, to be sent to the poulterer. The man ate the grouse and found it delicious, but could never be brought to believe that it was one of the birds he had ordered to be thrown away. We have purposely avoided saying any thing about the advantageous uses to which the chlorurets may be applied in the schools of anatomy, as being foreign to the object of this paper, and unconnected with the pursuits of that class of readers whom we here address.

**OIL FOR FURNITURE.**—For polishing mahogany furniture, we would mention and recommend the following.—It is simply cold-drawn linseed oil. The property of this oil differs from that of most other oleaginous fluids; essential oils, as those of cinnamon, cloves, &c., are pungent; that of others is soft and lubricating, as olive, palm, gallipoli, neatsfoot. But linseed oil possesses more particularly a tendency to harden and become solid, on long exposure to the air. It is this peculiar quality that is taken advantage of in its application to furniture; and which, with a little patience, and no hard rubbing, will produce a varnish far superior in durability, beauty, and usefulness to French polish, or any mixture for the purpose which we have ever seen; and we believe that there is not one which we do not know, and have not made trial of. The recipe alluded to, it need hardly be remarked, was not furnished by the writer of this communication; and (not doubting its excellence) we have not yet had an opportunity of trying it. A very little linseed oil is to be poured into a saucer, then, with a small piece of clean rag, smear the furniture with it. In a few minutes, wipe it off with an old duster kept for the purpose; and then rub the tables, &c., quite clean, with a second cloth. This simple, easy operation, performed regularly once a week, will gradually produce a polish that is unrivalled; for unless it were to be washed with soap, it will not injure; boiling water even might be poured over it with impunity; indeed, occasional washing with plain water is an advantage to it. Unlike the easily spoiled varnishes of the shops, furniture that is rubbed with this oil is not so readily scratched; and, if it be, the next week's application will nearly obliterate the marks. Again, the pores of the wood being filled with the application, it becomes very hard, and is able to resist the attacks of insects. We have possessed articles of furniture thus polished, so beautiful, that our simple plan has been conjectured to be a newly invented preparation,—“yet unknown to fame.”

**BED FURNITURE.**—We think that in our notions of household cleanliness, we—the English—have attained the happy medium; abjuring equally the negligence of some of our continental neighbours, and the over “slushing” of the natives of Holland. The domestic miseries of an American “white-washing,” also, we are fain to avoid, and content ourselves with “setting our house in order,” in a regular, rational manner, by degrees, and so judiciously, that little extra bustle and “fuss” is detectable in the household. This is as it should be. The spring season is the time chosen for this refreshing re-arrangement of furniture; and pleasant it is to admit the drying cheerful air thoroughly into every part of our dwellings, &c. This is the season for taking down, and putting up again, those white or light-coloured bed and window-furnitures, that may require to be washed. Every article should be removed from the bedsteads, which, if wooden, ought to be carefully attended to, thoroughly dusted, the sacking-cords braced, the sacking themselves well brushed, mattresses the same, and bedstead screws well tightened by means of a bed-winch. When the clean furniture is replaced on a bedstead, some sheets of large paper should be pasted together, and laid on the top (the tester) of the bed. Of whatever material the furniture may be composed, this will be found a useful and cleanly little arrangement, as it will not only receive all the dust that would otherwise settle on the furniture, but it may be carefully lifted off at any time, and the accumulated dust can be easily removed.

## PERFECT LOVE.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

“You will marry again, Eugenia?”

Mrs. Carlisle leans back in her chair and looks at her niece. Mrs. Thorne makes no reply, but her red lips take a bitter curve and a look of pain darkens her eyes. Mrs. Carlisle waits a reasonable time, then she repeats her assertion, adding a question thereto.

“You will marry again, Eugenia; don't you think so?”

“How can I tell, Aunt Esther? Having made a fool of myself once I have no guarantee that I shall not repeat the exploit. I seldom make the same mistake twice, however.”

“Dear me! Eugenia, what strong language you use. A woman is not necessarily a fool because she marries.”

“Opinions differ,” replied Mrs. Thorne, sighing wearily. “Why should I marry? I have wealth and freedom. I will not easily give up the latter again.”

“But, my dear, suppose you meet a man whom you love?”

Mrs. Thorne laughs scornfully as she replies:

“Aunt Esther, imagine me falling in love! Do you think I believe in that tradition of love between man and woman? Certainly not! Do you think for one instant I should believe anything of that kind any man could say to me? No, indeed! I learned my lesson too thoroughly.”

“But you should not judge all men by one,” Mrs. Carlisle urges.

“No, I should not, but I do.”

And so the subject drops for a time.

Eugenia Thorne is a very beautiful woman. Six years before this, at sixteen, she married “for love” a man of whom she knew very little, of utterly dissimilar and uncongenial tastes. Her married life was one of misery, and when, four years later, Harold Thorne was brought home dead, she was shocked to realise that her deepest feeling was one of unutterable relief. She was childless. Had it been otherwise, the cares of motherhood might have drawn her attention away from herself and rendered her life more tolerable.

Not that Harold abused her, as the world understands the term, but he had captured the belle of the season, his handsome face and fine fortune winning against many odds, and, fickle and selfish by nature, he soon tired of that which no one could take from him: He understood his wife's proud, sensitive nature as little as a tortoise understands a skylark.

As he grew neglectful, careless of her wishes and happiness, and often abusive in language, Eugenia hardened, brooded over her wrongs in silence, and gradually came to hate the man who had wrecked her happiness. But one day Harold was in a railway collision, and the fourth anniversary of his wedding found him lying dead in his great house, and Eugenia at twenty a widow and the heiress of all her husband's large fortune.

She was shocked at his violent death, shocked also that she could not mourn; but Harold Thorne, dead, could not undo the bitter wrong that Harold Thorne, living, had wrought, and his wife could not easily forget. Lonely in her elegant dwelling, after her husband's death she asked her aunt, Mrs. Carlisle, to share her home.

The two have not much in common; Mrs. Carlisle is an easy-going woman, to whom a nature like Eugenia's is Greek; but she is kind and sympathetic, and she enjoys her niece's wealth with a child's pleasure; she has seen little luxury in all her forty years till now.

And so we find them sitting together this lovely May day, and Mrs. Carlisle has at last put the thought that has troubled her for many days into words, with the foregoing result.

Two weeks later Mrs. Thorne takes her aunt's



breath away by the abrupt announcement that she is going to Europe.

"What has put this idea into your head?" asks Mrs. Carlisle.

"Nothing, only that I am tired to death of the same places and the same people, anything for a change. Sometimes I think I shall do something desperate, unless I can get away from the crowd of people who worship Mrs. Thorne's money."

"But isn't America large enough for you? There are thousands of places you have never seen, even in the United States."

"I know; but that will not do. I want to get out on the ocean, where there is nothing but sea and sky, away from the crowd, where nobody knows that I have any money."

"But suppose you are seasick?" remarks Mrs. Carlisle, prosaically.

"Better die of seasickness on the ocean, than ennui on land," Eugenia replies. "But I shall not be sick; will you go?"

"Fortunately, nothing makes me sick," Mrs. Carlisle answers, "and whither you go I will go, though where in the world you mean to fix your destination I don't know."

"I think I will search for the River Lethe," Eugenia responds.

A few days later they are on board an ocean steamer outward bound.

Eugenia has no settled purpose as to where they are going, or when they will return. She is restless, bitter, unhappy. A woman who has lost all faith in human nature, all belief in love, must be miserable; because faith and love are essentials to a woman's happiness.

She is seeking she knows not what. Peace—rest—forgetfulness—"anything for a change," as she said.

There are many passengers. With some of them Mrs. Carlisle is soon on friendly terms; but Mrs. Thorne makes friends with no one. She is always civil, coldly polite, if need be, but she intrenches herself behind a barrier of reserve which no one can surmount.

She stands one day leaning on the rail, looking out over the water. She is engaged in that most unprofitable of occupations—reviewing the past. She has become so engrossed in her own thoughts that she is unconscious of her surroundings.

For a few moments the mask with which pride usually covers her face is laid aside, and two gentlemen who stand furtively watching her see that she is not an icicle, a woman without heart, but a woman who suffers intensely.

She is sharply recalled to the present, however. The wind is blowing toward her, and with it comes the remark which Ralph Harley, the younger of the two men makes to his companion.

"Poor girl! How unhappy she must be!"

Eugenia turns quickly, the colour rising in her cheeks, meets Ralph Harley's eyes an instant, her own flashing, then walks away in her most stately manner and enters the cabin.

What is it in this stranger's face that haunts her? He is not remarkably handsome, not nearly so handsome as her dead husband, but his face is one of which people never tire. Little children look into the clear grey eyes, and forthwith slip their hands into his, electing him "friend" at once.

There is strength, tenderness, nobility in the face, and in the eyes, as Eugenia remembers them, great sympathy.

Mrs. Thorne appears no more on deck this day; she tells her aunt that her head aches, and Mrs. Carlisle has long ago learned the wisdom of letting her niece alone when she desires.

The next morning Eugenia, having recovered her self-possession, appears on deck with her aunt.

"By the way," Mrs. Carlisle remarks, "I was astonished last night to learn that Ralph Harley is on board. His mother and I were school-mates. I told him to come over to our corner to-day, and I would introduce him to you. There he is now."

And before Eugenia can demur, the gentleman

who has so angered her the previous day has approached and been introduced.

She is too well bred to be discourteous to her aunt's friend, she thinks, and so greets him pleasantly; but after a little Mrs. Carlisle crosses the deck to show a lady a new crochet stitch, and they are left comparatively alone.

"Are you enjoying the voyage, Mrs. Thorne?" Mr. Harley asks.

"Oh, yes, as well as I enjoy anything," she answers.

"Am I to infer from that remark that you take but little enjoyment in anything?"

"It is sometimes dangerous to draw inferences, Mr. Harley," she replies, coldly; "but in this case you are very nearly correct."

"What a pity," he says, gravely.

Eugenia grows angry at once.

"Why?" she demands. "Because everybody else goes into raptures over sea and sunset, must I do likewise?"

"Certainly not," he replies, still gravely; "because everyone else does you should not; but I don't see how you can help enjoying that, for instance," pointing to a white cloud, high in the heavens, looking like a great palace hewn from shining silver.

"Distance lends enchantment," she answers. "Doubtless the cloud is cold and wet, could we search it."

"Ah, but one should not look for the unpleasant always. Let us believe that the cloud is as soft and bright as it looks."

"Nonsense!" she replies, sharply. "I don't believe in encouraging pleasant fancies at the expense of common sense."

"Nor I," he answers; "but at the same time, life is in a measure what we make it; if we look at it through rose-coloured spectacles, we may see less of its sorrow."

"But suppose one has no rose-coloured glasses with which to view life?" she asks.

"Then," quietly, "if one must see nothing but the sorrowful side of life, I think in endeavouring to alleviate that sorrow, one forgets in a measure his own. You know selfish people are always unhappy."

Eugenia is silent; his words have struck home. Through all her unhappy married life, through her widowhood, she had been essentially selfish. The thought that she could or should do something to help others has never occurred to her.

She has so thoroughly been wrapped up in contemplation of her own wrongs, that she has been blind and deaf to all else. As she realises that Mr. Harley has guessed at this, and dared to call her attention to it, passionate anger takes possession of her, and she says, rudely:

"Mr. Harley, there is one thing that I enjoy, and that is solitude."

He rises instantly, lifts his hat, and walks away, leaving Eugenia furious at herself for her rudeness—at him, because of his power to move her—and last, because she caught sight of an amused smile under his moustache as he left her.

He does not come near her again, and at night she sheds the first tears that have dimmed her eyes for months.

The next day is stormy, confining the passengers to the cabin. Mr. Harley plays chess with a pretty girl, reads, and amuses himself very nicely without intruding upon Mrs. Thorne. He has said good morning very pleasantly in response to her salutation, but he lets her severely alone.

It begins to dawn upon Eugenia that she does not like to be ignored by Mr. Harley, and that it is quite possible that she owes him an apology for her unpardonable rudeness of the previous day. These two thoughts render her sufficiently uncomfortable for the remainder of a very disagreeable day.

The next day is fair, and Mrs. Thorne and her aunt ensconce themselves in their favourite corner of the deck.

"I suppose," Mrs. Carlisle remarks, with an air of patient resignation, "that you snubbed Ralph Harley unmercifully the other day, as you do everybody."

"And pray why should I not?" inquires Eugenia, haughtily.

"Oh! you should, of course, if you choose," Mrs. Carlisle replies, a little irritably; "but Ralph is not a man to bear much of that from any woman, and I know, Eugenia, that you would like him if you would only allow yourself to get acquainted with him."

Mrs. Thorne has no answer ready, and so makes none.

Presently Mr. Harley, pacing up and down the deck, passes within speaking distance.

"Mr. Harley," Eugenia says, her face lighting up with the brilliant smile that so seldom appears, "won't you take pity upon two women, and introduce a new subject? We have exhausted our mental powers talking about ourselves."

"A very interesting subject, I should imagine," said he, stopping beside her.

"There is a vacant chair," Mr. Carlisle remarks; "suppose you bring it over here and sit down?"

He complies, and as Eugenia meets the quizzical expression in his eyes, she fancies that he understands more than she wishes. At length Mrs. Carlisle discovers that her nephew is running short, and goes down to her state-room for more.

Mrs. Thorne seizes the opportunity, and with her usual vehemence plunges at once into the disagreeable subject of which she is thinking.

"Mr. Harley, I find I owe you an apology for my rudeness the other day; I have no excuse to offer except a ruffled temper."

The colour glows hotly in her cheeks, despite all her efforts, as she makes the amende.

"Yes," he replies coolly, "I think you were a little brusque, but you are very brave to admit the fact. Most ladies never consider themselves in the wrong." His audacity astonishes her, but before she can reply he continues, "However, I was greatly to blame myself. I had no possible right to hint at anything which you could construe into a criticism, therefore I sincerely beg your pardon. Are we friends?"

"Certainly," she answers, laughing. "Let us grant each other absolution, and sin no more."

And so they find themselves fast becoming friends.

This day Eugenia is happier than she has been for years, but at night the old bitter doubts assail her.

"Aunt Esther," she asks, abruptly, in the retirement of their state-room, "does Mr. Harley know anything about me?"

"Why no, dear, only what I told him."

"What did you tell him, please?"

"Only that you are a widow, and my niece, and that we are going abroad for a change of scenery and association."

"Anything about my money?" suspiciously.

"Certainly not, Eugenia; why should I? If I did it would not matter; he has plenty of his own."

Mrs. Thorne asks no more questions, but she knows that Ralph Harley occupies more of her thoughts than the occasion demands; still she cannot prevent it.

Shortly after midnight both ladies are aroused by a sharp rap at the door. They recognise Mr. Harley's voice as he says, imperatively:

"Dress quickly! There is trouble, but don't be frightened."

Neither woman is a coward, so there is no fainting. They hear stifled screams, hurrying feet, and shortly the door is opened, while a volume of smoke pours in.

"There is fire somewhere," Mr. Harley says, hurrying them on deck, "but don't be alarmed, we may be able to control it."

On deck there is a scene of wild confusion, notwithstanding the efforts of the officers and well-disciplined men.

Boats are being lowered and preparations made to abandon the vessel if need be, but the most of the crew and nearly all the male passengers are below, fighting the fire.

"Stay here till I come," Ralph says, and the



[SHE IS VERY COMPOSED WHEN SHE MEETS HIM.]

two white-faced women stand obediently under the star-light while he disappears.

Not far from Eugenia a mother is wringing her hands, while two little children sob unchecked. Stirred out of herself for once in her life, Mrs. Thorne goes forward, puts her arm around the half-maddened woman, and says, soothingly:

"Do not be so frightened, perhaps they can put the fire out. If not, there are boats, and we are only a day from port, and," hesitatingly, remembering how many times she herself has forgotten it, "God is watching over and caring for us all."

"Do you think so? Shall we not certainly be burned or drowned?" gasps the woman, eagerly, and occupied in soothing her and the children, Eugenia forgets her own terror.

Fifteen minutes later, Ralph Harley finds her with the youngest child in her lap.

"The danger is over; the fire is out," he says.

And Mrs. Thorne, the danger past, drops her head on the little girl's shoulder and sobs.

Ralph does not seek to stop her at first, but after a little he says, quietly:

"Let us thank God for preserving us from a great danger;" and together they go down to the cabin, where he has previously taken her aunt, and a great hush falls upon them all as a minister rises and says:

"Let us thank God for our deliverance."

At sunset the following day they sail into the harbour at Liverpool.

"We shall stay in London a month," Mrs. Carlisle says, giving Mr. Harley a card with a pencilled address. "Be sure and look us up."

"We shall be glad to see you," Mrs. Thorne adds, quietly; and if he is disappointed that she seems so cold, he does not betray it.

He is going to the north of Scotland on business, he tells them, and upon his return will surely call upon them, and so they part.

Two weeks later he sends up his card, having sought them at their London hotel.

Mrs. Carlisle is taking a nap, and Mrs. Thorne receives him alone.

She does not understand the thrill of pleasure that brings the blood to her cheeks and causes her heart to beat swiftly when his card is brought to her; nevertheless she is very composed when she meets him, giving him her hand for an instant.

"My aunt will be down soon," she says, "she will be delighted to see you."

"Have you enjoyed your sight-seeing thus far?" he asks.

"Very much, but I think there is nothing like travel to convince one of his own insignificance. Sometimes in this great city a feeling of utter loneliness comes over me, utter loneliness I might say when I realize that if I were suddenly blotted out of existence no one on earth except my aunt would care in a little while. You

know we are entirely alone in the world, Mr. Harley."

"No, I did not know. But, Mrs. Thorne, people away from home are apt to get a little morbid. Don't you know," looking keenly into her eyes, "that there are others besides your aunt to whom your death would be a lifelong sorrow?"

Eugenia turns her eyes away; his meaning is unmistakable, but before she need reply Mrs. Carlisle enters the room and the conversation is changed.

"I sail for home to-morrow night," Ralph says, rising to leave.

Eugenia's heart sinks, why she could scarcely tell. She has cherished some undefined idea that she might see more of him, that he might prolong his stay, though she knows he came over on urgent business for his firm in Philadelphia.

"He is going home to-morrow," she thinks, "and perhaps I shall never see him again."

Mrs. Carlisle's voice breaks in upon her unpleasant thoughts.

"Indeed! I almost wish we were going too, but," glancing at her niece, "Eugenia does not promise to soon weary of travel."

"Does business never bring you to New York?" Mrs. Thorne rouses herself sufficiently to ask. "In that case it would not be much out of your way to visit us at our home in Brooklyn."

"Thank you," he returns. "I do visit New York frequently, and shall be glad to avail myself of your permission to call."

"We shall see you here again?" Mrs. Carlisle inquires.

"Yes, if you will permit me I will call to-morrow afternoon."

And he goes away.

According to promise he spends an hour with them the following day, and after he has said "good by" for the last time, Eugenia feels that something has gone out of her life that she cannot bear to lose.

She is used to disappointment and lack of love, but this is different. Someway Mr. Harley has called forth all the good that is in her nature. She will never again be so wrapped in her own troubles. Still, it seems easier to be cheerful, unselfish and good in his presence. Unconsciously she has learned to lean on his stronger nature during the short time she has known him. The idea that she is learning to love the man has never suggested itself to her.

Having married too young to have learned what love is, having had all the warm currents of her nature frozen by an unhappy marriage, she is slow to yield to the influence that is destined to create a revolution in her life.

As for Ralph, he has been intensely interested in this beautiful woman from the first, so young to have known the sorrow that has so perceptibly hardened her nature. He does not know what her trouble has been, but he knew Harold Thorne before his marriage, heard something of his life afterward, and having studied human nature more or less all his life, he has concluded that living sorrow has hardened Mrs. Thorne as grief for the dead never does. Then she never by any chance mentions her dead husband's name, and Ralph is quick to understand.

Long before parting from her in London he has known that he loves Mrs. Thorne, but he knows, too, that she will not be easy to win.

As for Eugenia, the old restlessness is upon her, and a day or two after Ralph has sailed she and her aunt are on their way to Berlin. Mrs. Thorne has desired to travel that she may forget, strangely enough, the old trouble is merged in a new one.

She is learning what it is to love. At first she dimly suspects the truth; afterward she battles against the feeling desperately. With all her faults she is not vain, and she has no proof that Ralph cares for her.

"If he did," she repeats again and again to her own heart, "I would not marry him. He would be like all the rest. Marriage would change him, and we should hate each other."

But her heart refuses to believe the argu-



ments of her brain. In her heart she believes that Ralph Harley is no more like Harold Thorne than darkness is like daylight.

Notwithstanding her new trouble, she is not so unhappy as before she met him. She interests herself in the people she meets. Many a little child's face lights up at a kind word from "the pretty lady." Many a homesick little woman is led to talk of home and husband, and so relieved of the weariness of travelling alone.

Mrs. Carlisle is exceedingly worried at the change in her niece, fearing that she is going to die.

In September, weary of travel, longing to see Ralph again, though she will not admit it to herself, Eugenia and her aunt turn their faces homeward.

Mrs. Carlisle is not very brilliant, perhaps, but she is wise enough to have learned that Mr. Harley cares for Mrs. Thorne, and that Mrs. Thorne is far from indifferent to Mr. Harley.

"Though goodness knows," she says to herself, "whether with her notions of matrimony she would marry him if he asked her."

They have been at home some time. Eugenia is much sought after in society, but though she is less haughty and more lovable than before, she allows no man to think that a proposal of marriage would receive other than an unqualified "no."

One day Ralph Harley is announced, and she goes down to meet him.

"You don't look upon life in quite such a lugubrious fashion as you did a year ago," he says, laughingly.

"How do you know?" she retorts.

"Oh, it is easy enough to tell! A half hour's conversation has shown me that."

"I have to thank you for it then," she answers. "Do you remember our first conversation?"

"I remember, but in any event I only in a manner placed the key in your hand. You unlocked the door yourself." Then changing the subject, "I shall be delayed in New York a fortnight. If agreeable I will come over to-morrow night and take you and Mrs. Carlisle over to hear Neilson."

Mrs. Carlisle, who has managed to absent herself for a few moments, re-entering the room just at this time, hears the invitation and accepts for both.

And so it happens that every evening during the next two weeks Mr. Harley and Mrs. Thorne meet. Once or twice he has come over early in the afternoon and taken her to ride, but his days are mostly given to a tedious law-suit in the New York court, in which he has been retained. But at length the case is decided; he has won, and Eugenia receives a note asking her to be at home at eight o'clock that evening.

"I have something I want to tell you," he writes. "I am going home to-morrow."

Eugenia understands.

"What shall I do?" she thinks.

Mrs. Carlisle thinks it is time for a little interference.

"Eugenia," she says, "Mr. Harley is going away to-morrow."

"Yes, aunt," quietly.

Mrs. Carlisle gives her niece a searching look, then asks the somewhat startling question:

"What will you say when he asks you to be his wife?"

"What reason have you to think he will ask me?"

And Mrs. Thorne blushes guiltily.

"Nonsense!" impatiently. "He that runs may read. It is plain to the most careless observer that Ralph loves you devotedly, and I tell you, Eugenia, you will not find another like him while you live."

"Why should I marry anybody? I have money enough, friends enough, and—"

"Love enough, I suppose," interpolates Mrs. Carlisle.

Mrs. Thorne is silent, and her aunt wisely says no more.

Before night Eugenia has made up her mind, and at eight o'clock she and Mr. Harley are alone in the library. Always beautiful, she is radiant

to-night, and Ralph's breath comes hard as he realises that the time is here, and perhaps he will lose the woman he loves so dearly.

"Eugenia," he says, quietly; "I may call you Eugenia just to-night? Is it necessary that I should say that which you must have learned long ago, that I love you, that I want you to be my wife?"

And Mrs. Thorne, the proud, cold, brilliant woman who has planned her reply in set words to the grand man who stands before her, waiting, loses all control of herself and cries:

"Oh, Ralph! I cannot, I cannot!" bursting into a passion of tears.

He has seen her cry before; his face is very pale, but he waits patiently until she has regained a little self-control; then he sits down beside her and takes her hand in his.

"Just for this time!" he pleads, and she lets him retain it. "Now, my darling, will you tell me why you cannot be my wife? Is it because you do not love me?"

She looks into his truthful, loving grey eyes, and the falsehood that had seemed easy an hour ago she finds herself incapable of uttering now.

"No, it is not that," she falters.

"Ah! my darling," his face lighting up, "let it be the truth, the whole truth. Do you love me?"

She drops her eyes, answering faintly:

"I am afraid I do."

"Well then," he speaks more cheerfully, "if I love you and you love me why can you not be my wife?"

"Ought I to tell you?" she asks, even now appealing to his strength.

More than ever she feels how she has wronged this man when she said, "All men are alike."

"I think you ought," he replies, gently; and so, yielding to a nature braver, nobler than her own, she tells him the story of her married life, much of which he has already guessed.

"Therefore," he says, calmly, after she had finished, "you are afraid to be my wife, fearing a similar experience?"

"Yes, I am afraid."

"And yet you love me?"

"I do."

"But 'perfect love casteth out fear.'"

"I know—so perhaps mine is not perfect love."

"Poor little girl!" he says, softly; and before she is aware of his intention he presses a kiss on her forehead and is gone.

"Well, Eugenia?" Mrs. Carlisle says at the breakfast table, looking into Mrs. Thorne's pale face.

"Well."

Eugenia looks back defiantly.

"Did you refuse him?"

"I did."

"Then you have the satisfaction of knowing that you have made a fool of yourself in a different way this time," Mrs. Carlisle says, satirically.

Poor woman! she is disappointed and should be excused. At noon Eugenia gets a letter. It runs this way:

"MY DARLING.—I think I was premature. I will wait patiently, and knowing that I possess even a portion of your love will help me to bear our separation. I shall not see you again until the 'fear' is cast out, but will you not write to me, and so keep me from thinking that the 'fear' is casting out the 'love'? If it is not for many years the slightest intimation that you want to see me will bring me to you. Yours, always, "RALPH HARLEY."

Unwisely, considering the fact that she cannot marry him, Mrs. Thorne replies, and this is the beginning of a correspondence that lasts all winter.

Mrs. Carlisle knows of it, and takes courage once more.

Through his letters Eugenia learns more of her lover's cultivated mind and nobility of character than she has previously known, but they neither of them speak of their last interview.

It is weary waiting for Ralph, and though she scarcely knows that she is waiting it is a weary time for Eugenia.

Mr. Harley sits in his office one evening in June, just a year from the time he first met Mrs. Thorne on an outward-bound steamer. He is thinking it all over, and is a little discouraged.

"Suppose Eugenia meets one whom she loves perfectly," he thinks. "And yet better so if I am not the one; yet I shall never love another."

Presently the boy enters with the mail. One of Eugenia's perfumed notes is amongst it. He opens it eagerly. It is brief, but its contents start him into action like an electric shock. It is only this:

"DEAR RALPH,—A year ago to-day. Do you remember? Perfect love has cast out all fear. "Yours, EUGENIA."

At night the northern-bound express carries a man who seems so perfectly happy, at peace with himself and all creation, that people turn again to look at the pleasant face and the laughing eyes.

Eugenia receives him in the library where they parted.

"It is more pleasant here," she explains, and happy tears stand in her eyes as he takes her in his arms, pressing tender kisses on her lips.

"At last—oh! my dear one, at last!"

THEY BEGIN WRONG.—A great many young men fail to win the wives they covet because they conduct their courtship in the wrong way. The only plan they know of to express their affection and matrimonial intentions is to bounce at the object of their affection, and kiss, or try to kiss her, squeeze her hand, or steal an arm about her waist. Now, girls who are bright, know very well that imprudence expresses itself in the same way. A girl with any self-esteem cannot be willing that any man should thus establish a right to her lips or her fingers. And it will be such a pleasure to "put down" what she must feel to be presumption of her favour, without warrant from herself, that she will think of nothing else. Compliments and admiring glances, all sorts of delicate attentions, have great power to win a woman's heart; but if she is worth having, premature attempts at caresses will not only offend her, but will actually inspire her with dislike for a man she might have loved dearly, if he had not at once presumed too much, and caused her to doubt his respect before she had the slightest assurance of his affection.

REPUBLICAN SIMPLICITY.—A story is related of an old Dutch merchant of Amsterdam, who, having amassed a fortune in trade, determined to spend the remnant of his life in the quiet seclusion of his country house. Before taking leave of his city friends, he invited them to dine with him. The guests, on arriving at his residence, were surprised to see the extraordinary preparations that had been made for their reception. On a plain oak table, covered with a blue cloth, were some wooden plates, spoons, and drinking vessels. Presently two old seamen brought in dishes containing herrings—some fresh, others salted or dried. Of these the guests were invited to partake; but it was clear they had little appetite for such poor fare, and with considerable impatience they awaited the second course, which consisted of salt beef and greens. This also, when brought in, they did not seem to relish. At last the blue cloth was removed, and one of fine white damask substituted; and the guests were agreeably surprised to see a number of servants in gorgeous liveries enter with the third course, which consisted of everything necessary to form a most sumptuous banquet. The master of the house then addressed his friends in the following terms:—"Such, gentlemen, has been the progress of our republic. We began with short frugality, by means of which we became wealthy; and we end with luxury, which will beget poverty. We should, therefore, be satisfied with our beef and greens, that we may not have to return to our herrings."

# MARTHA AND HER CLOCK.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

DURING the last few years of my school life I lodged in a small, old-fashioned house, kept by an elderly unmarried woman; the only one remaining of what had once been a large family. Father, mother, and her two brothers were dead; her sisters had followed their husbands to different parts, excepting the youngest, who was married to a doctor in the same town. So Martha was left alone in the old house, and managed to eke out a scanty income by letting some of the now unoccupied rooms.

Yet she considered it no hardship that she could only afford herself a dinner on Sundays, for her wants were few, owing to the habits of strict economy to which her father had trained all his children, on principle, as well as in consideration of his narrow means.

Although in youth she had but little schooling, yet the reflections of many solitary hours, joined to a quick understanding and the naturally serious tone of her character, combined to render her, at the time I made her acquaintance, a woman of much greater culture than is at all common in her class. I must allow she did not always speak quite grammatically, although she was a great reader, and that chiefly of biographical and poetical works, on which she could generally give a correct and independent judgment; and, what is even more rare, could always distinguish between what was really good and what was worthless. To her, all the poet's creations were living, thinking beings, whose actions were not dependent on the fancy of the writer; and sometimes she would ponder for hours, scheming by what means so many beloved persons might have been rescued from a cruel fate.

Martha never found life a burden in her solitude, though at times a sense of the aimlessness of her outer existence would sadden her; she felt the want of someone for whom she might have worked and cared. In the absence of all nearer friends, her lodgers had the benefit of this praiseworthy impulse. I, among others, was the recipient of many little kindnesses and attentions at her hands. Flowers were her greatest delight, and it seemed to me symbolic of her contented and resigned mind, that white ones, and of those again the commoner kinds, were her chief favourites. It was to her always the first festival in the year when her sister's children brought her the first snowdrops and crocuses out of their garden; then a little china basket was taken down from the cupboard, and, under her tender care, the flowers decorated the little chamber for weeks.

Now, as Martha had very few acquaintances, and spent nearly all the long winter evenings alone, she had, by force of her peculiar lively imagination, endowed all her surroundings with a sort of life or personality. The old pieces of furniture in her room became thus, as it were, a part of herself, and had the faculty of holding converse with her; certainly the intercourse was, for the most part, a silent one, but on this account none the less real and free from risk of misunderstandings.

Her spinning-wheel, her carved oak arm-chair, were strange things that often took the oddest whims; but far surpassing all in this respect, was an ancient clock which Martha's father had bought fifty years ago at an Amsterdam fair, and even then as an old curiosity. It certainly looked extraordinary enough: two mermaids, carved in lead, and painted, leaned their faces on either side against the tarnished dial-plate, their scaly fish bodies, still bearing traces of gilding, surrounded the lower part of it and united beneath; its hands seemed to be in the form of scorpions' tails. Probably the works were worn out by long use, for the stroke of the pendulum was harsh and irregular, and the weights would sometimes slip down several inches at a time.

This clock was the liveliest of all Martha's companions; she had not a thought in which it did not mix itself up. Sometimes when she fell a brooding over her loneliness, the pendulum would begin, tick, tack, tick, tack; growing louder and louder, and gave her no peace, ever interrupting the train of her thoughts. At last she was forced to rouse herself and look up—and lo! the sunbeam shone warm through the window-panes; the carnations on the little flower-stand smelt so sweet; and without the swallows shot twittering beneath the blue heavens. She could not but be cheerful again, the world around her was all so bright.

But the clock had a strong will of its own; it was old and did not pay much attention to the modern time, therefore it often struck six when it should have been twelve; and again, to make up for it, it would go on striking till Martha was obliged to take the weight off the chain. The strangest thing was that sometimes it was not able to strike at all, however hard it might try; then the machinery creaked and creaked, but the hammer would not fall.

This happened generally during the night, and always awoke Martha, and however bitter the cold, and however dark the winter night might be, she never failed to get up, and did not rest till she had helped the poor old clock out of its difficulties.

Then, when she was in bed again, she lay and wondered why the clock had roused her, and asked herself if she had neglected any part of the day's work, and whether she had closed it with good thoughts.

It was near Christmas. A heavy snowstorm having prevented my journey homewards, I was invited to spend Christmas Eve at the house of an intimate friend. The Christmas tree had been lit up, the children had rushed in a joyous troop into the long-closed room; afterwards we had supped on carp and drunk punch according to custom—none of the old usages had been omitted.

The following morning I entered Martha's room, to take her, as usual, my good wishes for the season. She sat with her arm resting on the table; her work lay apparently long forgotten.

"Well, how did you spend your Christmas Eve yesterday?" I asked.

She looked down on the floor and answered:

"At home."

"At home? And not with your sister's family?"

"Ah," she said, "since my mother died in that bed, ten years ago yesterday, I have never spent a Christmas Eve out of the house. Although my sister sent for me yesterday too, and when it began to grow dark I did once think of going to them; but—the old clock went on in such a strange way again; it seemed to me to keep on repeating, 'Don't go, don't go; what do you want there? Your Christmas Eve has nothing to do with them!'"

And so she had stayed at home, in the small chamber, where she had played as a child, and where, in later years, she had closed the eyes of her parents, and the old clock ticked on the same as ever.

Now that it had got its own way, however, and Martha had laid past her best gown in her wardrobe again, it ticked so softly, quite softly, until at length it was scarcely audible.

Martha could give herself up undisturbed to the memories of all the Christmas Eves in her life.

Her father sat once more in the carved oak arm-chair; he wore his fine velvet cap and his Sunday coat; to-day his serious eyes gleamed cheerfully, for it was Christmas Eve, Christmas Eve, many, ah! how many, many years ago!

True, no Christmas tree decked the table—that was only for rich people—but in its stead, two great thick candles shed abroad such a brilliant light in the small room that the children had actually to shade their eyes with their little hands when the door was opened and they were allowed to come in from the dark passage. Then they approached the table, but, according to the custom of the house, sedately and without loud

demonstration, and saw what Santa Claus had brought for them.

There were no costly toys certainly, not even cheap ones, only useful and necessary articles—a dress, a pair of shoes, a slate, a hymn-book, etc. But the children were just as well pleased with their slate and their new hymn-book, and went in turn to kiss the father's hand, who sat meanwhile contentedly smiling in his arm-chair.

The mother, her sweet, gentle face beneath the close-fitting cap, tied on the new apron, and drew letters and figures on the new slate. But she had not much time to spare, for she had to go into the kitchen and bake the apple-cakes, for that was a most important event in the children's eyes, on no account to be overlooked.

Then the father opened the new hymn-book, and began, with his clear voice, "Rejoice! and sing his praise," and the children joined in and sang the whole hymn, standing round their father's arm-chair.

In the pauses they heard the mother moving about and the hissing of the apple-cakes.

"Tick, tack!—there it went again—tick, tack!—louder and louder."

Martha started. All was dark around her—without, the snow lay in the fair moonlight. But for the stroke of the pendulum there was death-like silence throughout the house. No children's voices sang in the little chamber, no fire crackled in the kitchen. She alone remained behind, the others were all, all gone.

But what was wrong with the old clock again? Ah, it gave warning for eleven; and the memory of another, alas! a very different Christmas Eve, many years later, arose.

Her father and brothers were dead, her sisters were married, only her mother was left beside her. She had occupied her husband's carved arm-chair ever since his death, and had given up all her little household duties to Martha. Day by day the gentle face had waxed paler, the meek eyes dimmer. At length she was obliged to keep her bed entirely.

This had gone on for several weeks, and now it was Christmas Eve. Martha sat by the bedside and listened to the quiet breathing of the sleeper. Deathlike stillness reigned in the chamber, only the clock ticked on. Now it gave warning for eleven. The mother opened her eyes and asked for a drink.

"Martha," she said, "when the spring comes and I am stronger, we'll go and visit your sister Hannah. I dreamt just now that I saw her children; you have too little change here."

The mother had quite forgotten that Hannah's children had died the autumn before. Martha did not seek to remind her. She nodded assent and took hold of the hand which hung by the bedside. The clock struck eleven.

And now too it struck eleven but faintly, as if from a far, far distance.

Martha heard a long-drawn sigh. She thought her mother was going to sleep again, and remained silent and motionless, holding the hand between her own. At length she fell into a sort of doze. Thus about an hour passed.

The clock struck twelve! The candle had burnt down, the moon shone bright through the window, her mother's pale face looked from among the pillows. The hand which Martha held in hers was cold. She did not relax her hold of the cold hand. The whole night long she sat by her dead mother.

And thus she sat now in the same chamber with her memories, and the old clock ticked on, now loud, now faint; it knew about everything, it had lived through it all with Martha; it reminded her of all her sorrows, of all her joys.

I know not if Martha and her clock still keep each other company; it is now many years since I lived in her house, and that little town lies far from my home. She had a way of speaking openly of things, which those who cling to life usually avoid.

"I have never been sick," she would say; "I shall likely live to a great age."

If this belief has proved true, and should these pages find their way into her chamber, may she think kindly of me as she reads them. The old clock will help her memory, for it, of course, knows about everything.



## SCIENCE.

**Tobacco and Science.**—Tyndall has shown that the blue of the sky and the blue of the sea are caused by the breaking up of the rays of light by infinitely small particles of solid matter. The blue smoke rising from the glowing end of a cigar or pipe contains very minute particles of carbon at a high temperature. After the smoke has been drawn into the mouth and expired, two changes have taken place—the smoke is at a lower temperature and laden with moisture. It is also heavier. Perhaps there has been some chemical change in addition. At any rate, we may safely say the atoms of carbon have united into larger particles—just as coal-smoke particles form smuts—and reflect in a different manner. The smoke issuing from the paper tube of a cigarette contains the two smokes—a small quantity of smoke at a high temperature drawn back from the glowing end, and a larger quantity of cold smoke that has been in the smoker's mouth, which has been rendered darker and heavier.

A FELLOW of the Royal Astronomical Society believes that the Irish character is greatly influenced by the wretched potato diet, and says: "It may be gathered from the reports of the hideous outrages which unhappily reach us daily from Ireland, the details of which show, beyond cavil, that their perpetrators are the most arrant curs upon the face of the earth. Firing from safe concealment behind stone walls, and running like hares the moment their barrels are emptied; breaking, in overwhelming force, disguised, and with blackened faces, into lonely houses, and shooting and maiming solitary and defenceless men and women; skulking away at the mere sight and sound of resistance, and never daring to face a human being who is in a position effectually to oppose them, these people present an example of an arrant cowardice which happily disgraces but few (so-called) 'civilised' races in the world. Now, enlist these men, give them their daily ration of good, wholesome meat, and what do we find? Simply, that there is no braver soldier in existence than the Irishman. Where are these finer regiments to be found than those mainly recruited from Ireland? Why, I have myself known an Irish private, totally unarmed, go in and seize a comrade half frantic with drink and armed with a boyonet with which he had previously kept several men at bay. As an example of cool courage, unflinched by the excitement of action, this seemed very striking to me, and certainly in odd contrast to the pusillanimity of his vegetable-fed confrère."

**REASONING IN ANIMALS.**—Many most interesting cases have been given in "Knowledge" on this subject. Here is one which surpasses, perhaps, all yet given. It is from Dr. Percival A. Pothergill, who says: "One of our seamen took a large, white-coated bitch at Petropaulskoi, in Kamschatka, and she became a great favourite with the crew. Subsequently the ships were ordered to China, and lay off the English Hongs at Canton. It was customary to allow the bitch to swim ashore for a run, and she used to swim back to the ship afterwards, and be hauled on board by placing her neck and forelegs in a bowling-knotted noose. But the tide running furiously in that part of the river, the dog had no chance of making the vessel by pushing off from the shore ahead of the ship, but used to come down to a low wharf opposite, and watch for bits of wood, etc., floating, to see which way the tide ran, and then running up in a contrary direction, would jump in, and come down with the tide to the ship. On one occasion she was seen to watch for some time; but, as it happened, nothing floated by to give her an indication of the direction of the tide. Whereupon, she was observed to drop down on one fore-leg, and, the planks of the wharf being almost level with the water, hang the free paw over into the water, by which means, apparently, she obtained the knowledge of the tide's direction, and, running up against it, came off, as usual, quite safely."

## ART.

It would seem that both politicians and divines are agreed as to the necessity of creating and encouraging an atmosphere of appreciation and understanding of all that is elegant among the masses. Canon Barry discreetly told the students of the Royal Architectural Museum and School of Art at Westminster that such institutions as theirs "would not create, though they might discover and help, youths of heaven-born genius. There must be both the hour and the man." As a contemporary observes, heaven-born geniuses are scarce natural productions, even in Westminster; and when, from time to time, they have appeared, at rare intervals, in the world's history, they have managed to push their way to the front without the talent for discovery or material assistance latent in local schools of design. The Archbishop of York, moreover, impressed upon the students of the York School of Art that every kind of art must bear the personal impress of the artist himself. It must have his zeal and character impressed upon it. If they had no character to impress, and if they never acquired one, they would never be artists in the highest sense. They who drew, even though they should never attain to the position of great artists, would become better observers of this great world, and would look at it more carefully and understand it better. Art meant a great deal of work. Carlyle said that, as far as he had observed, genius was the art of taking a great deal of pains. Everybody now knew that genius, if it was not the "art of taking great pains," did require great pains. Mr. George Augustus Sala was not to be outdone by "the cloth" in art talk, and he therefore presided at the distribution of prizes to the students at the West London School of Art.

Perhaps the most energetic all-round apostle of art is Mr. Hubert Herkomer. He has determined to found and superintend a school of art near his own studio at Bushey. But I will let the popular artist speak for himself. "The truth," said Mr. Herkomer, "is this. A neighbour of mine said to me, 'I would willingly build a studio near yours if I could persuade you to come in now and then to correct the drawings of my niece (for whom I should build the studio) and those of her friends who would work with her.' I must confess to you that I have a real love for students who are in earnest, and who are enthusiastic. I am, happily for myself, in communication with many students abroad and at home, and my greatest pleasure is to welcome them to my home at Bushey. This neighbourly proposition seemed to open out an opportunity for making it 'convenient' to have students around me, purely out of selfish reasons, because I fear I have proved to you how pernicious this procedure is for students. Selfish, I say, because I honour all students and wish to be in their company. On the other hand, there will be special opportunities offered to these students for the development of their art." I may draw attention to the fact that Mr. Herkomer does not propose to confine his attention to painting. He says: "If a student fails to reach the highest art I shall endeavour to show him other branches of art, such as etching, mezzotint engraving, wood-carving, or chasing in metal." Really this artist is wonderfully versatile in his undertakings. One day he startled us by appearing on the advertisement boardings. Now he is prepared to instruct in wood carving and the chasing of metal. A few weeks ago he was figuring as a skillful tapestry painter in the exhibition organised by Messrs. Howell and James. He thus aided the coming fashion for such work by exhibiting a large decorative painting, viz., a graceful idyllic composition under the title of "The Shepherd's Love." Although unfinished, it was important as showing how well adapted for original design is the reviving art whose excellencies seem hitherto to have been held to exist chiefly in imitation. Such a large grasp of art reminds one of the old masters of the Italian Renaissance, and it is pleasing to find a modern painter emulating a Leonardo da Vinci or Michael Angelo. Mr. Herkomer is the right man in the right place.

## FACETIÆ.

Snooks says there is a marked difference between birds and women. As an illustration of this, he cites the fact that a bit of looking-glass on a fruit tree will frighten away every bird that approaches it, while the same article would attract more fair ones than a load of cherries.

At a recent festive feast a married man, who should have known better, proposed, "The Ladies, who divide our sorrows, double our joys, and treble our expenses!"

THEODORE HOOK once dined with Mr. Hatchet. "Ah! my dear fellow," said his host, deprecatingly, "I am sorry to say you will not get to-day such a dinner as our friend Tom Moore gave us." "Certainly not," replied Hook; "from a Hatchet one can expect nothing but a chop."

A GENTLEMAN taking an apartment said to the landlady: "I assure you, madam, I never left a lodging but my landlady shed tears." She answered: "I hope it was not, sir, because you went away without paying."

FOOTE, dining at the house of Mrs. Thrale, found nothing to his liking, and sat in expectation of something better. A neck of mutton being the last thing he refused it, as he had the other dishes. As the servant was taking it away, however, understanding there was nothing more, Foote called out to him: "Halloa! John; bring that back again. I find it's neck or nothing."

SAID TOM: "Since I have been abroad I've taken so much veal that I'm ashamed to look a calf in the face." "I s'pose, sir, then," said a wag, "you contrive to shave without a glass."

Mrs. CROSSPATCH was engaging a servant. "You'll find me rather cross, sometimes," said she. "Och! ma'am," exclaimed Bridget; "I'm used to that. I never mind a cross mistress." Nor did she, as Mrs. C. found after she had engaged her.

UNKIND.—An American editor says, "Because we ventured last week to introduce a few Latin words into a paragraph, just to make a little show of knowledge, a contemporary quotes Latin at us in the most ferocious manner. It says, 'Nihil fit.' Perhaps our captious commentator can inform us who is Nihil, and if he fit who did he fight, and what did he fight for?"

A CELEBRATED poet at one time advertised that he would supply "Lines for any Occasion." A fisherman wrote to him for "a line strong enough to catch a porpoise."

"HAVE you, in your album, any original poetry?" asked one young lady of another. "No," was the reply, "but some of my friends have favoured me with original spelling."

THE venerable lady of a celebrated physician, seeing her husband in the funeral procession of one of his patients, said it appeared too much like a tailor carrying home his work.

A COLLEGE professor, one of your precise men, who measures off sentences as a clerk does choice ribbons, while bathing got out of his depth and had gone down twice, without saying a word, when, appearing the third time, he rolled on his back, and, blowing like a porpoise, exclaimed: "It is anticipated that some one will, without any unnecessary prostration, extend me a rope."

"SALLY," said a green youth, in a venerable white hat and grey pants, through which his legs projected half a foot—perhaps more: "Sally, before we go into this 'ere Museum to see the Enchanted Horse, I want to ax you somethin'." "Well, Ichabod, what is it?" "Why, you see, this 'ere business is gwine to cost a hull quarter a-piece, and I can't afford to spend so much fur nuthin'. Now, ef you'll say you'll hav me, darn'd ef I don't pay the hull on't myself. I will!" Sally made a non-committal reply, which Ichabod interpreted to suit himself, and he strode up two steps at a time, and paid "the whole on't."

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## IN PREPARATION.

## A NEW NOVEL.

## THE WITHERED BRANCH.

A WILDLY ROMANTIC STORY OF THE  
WELSH COAST AT THE  
TIME OF THE CATO STREET CONSPIRACY.

CHAPTER I.—A TERRIBLE ESCAPE.

CHAPTER II.—A MYSTERIOUS REFUGE.

## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**VOLUNTEER.**—The privates in the Life Guards and Blues wear their undress when off duty, and when on furlough may wear the clothes of a civilian.

**CRIBBAGE.**—A knave and three fives in hand, and the fourth five turned up, will count twenty-eight.

**BESSIE** is the wife of a baker, and newly married. She regards her past life as "a giddy one," in consequence, as she believes, of "her pretty face and figer" being so attractive to the young men, who were always flattering and running after her. She is in trouble; for the young men she encouraged in her maiden days still run after her, and her husband is growing jealous. What is she to do? We confess ourselves unable to give advice. If Bessie fails to repel such very unreasonable admirers, after really trying to do so, what more remains to be done?—unless the baker has a plan.

**W. W.**—The Italian Opera House was opened first in 1704, and was destroyed by fire in 1789.

**G. S.**—Marry the cook.

**E. GRAY.**—Let it simmer for two hours on the hob.

**JANE MCCARTHY.**—The disease arises from poorness of the blood, which may be due in your case—probably is—to a want of healthy out-door exercise. Low spirits are its natural accompaniments. We deeply sympathize with you.

**FLORENCE MORRIS.**—The Scriptures distinctly promise the restoration of the Jews to the land they still fondly regard as their own, and for many years past the obstacles in the way of such a consummation appear to have been gradually disappearing.

**J. WILSON.**—(1) Our "own private opinion" is that the mental capacities of men and women differ rather in kind than quality; but we cannot undertake to give you "all the reasons and arguments" that are in favour of either your views or our own. They would require a volume. (2) We have no sympathy with those who organize crusades against religion.

**LITTLE DORRIT.**—Prepared chalk and spirits of wine mixed to the consistency of cream, applied with a piece of soft flannel, and rubbed off with a leather, will clean silver admirably.

**BERWICK.**—The Ex-Empress of the French was Eugénie de Montijo, Countess-Duchess of Teba. She was born in Spain, and married the late Emperor when she was twenty-six years of age. Her mother was Donna Maria Manuela Kirk-Patrik of Closeburn, in Scotland, Countess Dowager of Montijo, Countess of Miranda, and Duchess of Farnesca; and her father, Count de Montijo, an officer of rank in the Spanish army, and the descendant of a Scotch family, Kirk-Patrik of Closeburn. Her great-grandfather died on the scaffold, in 1745, in consequence of the part he played in favour of the Prince Charles Edward, and it was his son who sought shelter in Spain.

**TINTOF.**—If you scald the new tubs well with boiling water, and suffer it to remain in them until cold, there will be no taste of the wood in any liquid you may afterwards put in them.

**KATIE** tells us that she has just suffered from a terrible calamity, arising from having put away the hearth-brush, after sweeping up the cinders, with a burning coal left amongst the bristles. She thinks it would be well if we mentioned the fact, by way of warning to careless or thoughtless housewives.

**G. A.**—The tea-kettle should be well rinsed out every day, to remove the sediment deposited by the water.

**EMILY JACKSON.**—Cotton sheets last a shorter time than linen ones do, but they are warmer for the winter.

**C. BENTON.**—Let your bee-hives face the south or the south-east.

**J. VERNON.**—Ebony may be cleaned with a soft cloth and a little sweet oil, with a dry cloth for finishing.

**H. SMITH.**—Mr. G. Cornwall Lewis was Mr. Empson's successor as editor of the "Edinburgh Review."

**Z.**—Certainly the word "nervous" is wrongly applied when it is used to indicate strength.

**GEORGE H.**—Consult some first-class medical man who has made insanity his special study, without a moment's delay. Insanity, unless it is hereditary, if dealt with in its earliest stage of development, is curable; and the strange impulses and almost uncontrollable temptations you describe indicate, beyond any reasonable doubt, the presence of mental disease. Put aside all false shame while it is in your power to do so, and take medical advice instantly.

**JOHN BULL.**—The word "England" means the land of the Angli, or Engli, or, as we say, the English.

**A STUDENT OF RUSSIAN HISTORY.**—The first great battle between the Russians and the Turks was that of 1569, when Ivan the Terrible was Czar, and it was decided in favour of the former.

**HENRY E.**—While the child is so young, half an hour's practice at the piano every day will be amply sufficient.

**E. GRAHAM.**—The farce was written originally by Douglas Jerrold, when he was eighteen years of age. He called it, "More Frightened than Hurt." It was first played at Sadler's Wells Theatre successfully, was afterwards translated into the French language, and played at Paris, and some years afterwards was "adapted" from the French, and put upon the boards of the Olympic Theatre, for which in its original form it had been rejected. It was then called "Fighting by Proxy."

**E. S. R.**—The lines—  
"Dost thou not love the golden antique time  
When knights and heroes, for a lady's love,  
Would spear the dragon?" (Proctor).  
were written by "Barry Cornwall" (Proctor).

**JAMES.**—There is a place called Bwlth in Breconshire, on the banks of the river Wye, South Wales.

**F. CARSON.**—Puddle with clay to the thickness of about ten inches, well beaten down, and cover with coarse gravel.

**ARTHUR KIDD.**—If we were the young lady, such verses would deeply move us; but we are not. She will read them with greater pleasure than any other person is likely to experience; you should have sent them to her, not to us, who can make no use of them.

**W. JARMAN.**—If the mercury falls in frosty weather, it indicates a thaw; if in wet weather, it indicates continuous rain; and if in wet weather it rises, and continues so, it foretells fine weather. It rises highest when the wind is from the north and east.

**INCREDULOUS.**—Green grasshoppers have been eaten; and a naturalist once well known, the Rev. Mr. Shepherd, described them as making a very pleasant and excellent dish.

**F. D.**—The formation of New South Wales as an English colony dates from 1788.

**A YOUNG READER.**—George the Third ascended the throne on the 25th October, 1760. He was then in his twenty-second year. He married the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, on September 8th, 1761. She died fourteen months before her husband died, on January 29th, 1800.

**IN TOWNS.**—Mr. Terry died in 1829. He was born in the year 1780. In conjunction with Mr. Yates, and with the assistance of Sir Walter Scott, who made himself security for the money, Mr. Terry purchased the Adelphi Theatre, in 1828. He married Miss Nasmyth, the daughter of a celebrated portrait painter.

**J. OAKES.**—Wiggins was executed for murder in October, 1867. It was the opinion of a large number of people that he was innocent of the crime, and almost everybody agreed in regarding the evidence on which he was convicted as extremely unsatisfactory and imperfect.

**A MOTHER.**—Get medical advice. It may be an ordinary abscess, and yield to mere domestic treatment of the kind described; but, on the other hand, it may be aneurism, which is quite a different and far more serious thing.

**C.**—The drum is of too much importance in orchestral music to be abandoned. Its measured beat gives a certain character and expression which nothing else could supply. It is by no means an easy instrument to master.

**S. B.**—The song is a very old one, which was written by Tom Dibdin, and its title was, "May the Queen Live for Ever!" It was set to music by Mr. T. Williams, and published about the time of Her Majesty's coronation.

**ELIZA.**—You write a good hand, and your portrait is undoubtedly that of a very pretty and attractive girl. We should guess your age to be seventeen.

**BLUEBELL.**—How can we tell? Even if you are beautiful, you may not be amiable, and many a beauty for that reason goes to her grave unloved and unmarried.

**J. GRANT.**—There can be no doubt of the fact that Ireland, as well as England and Scotland, had its Danish settlers; traces of their presence abound.

**NELLY.**—To obtain a skeleton of the mouse expeditiously, put it into a box perforated with small holes, and place this box in an ant-hole. The ants will speedily devour every part of it except the bones and ligaments.

**F. G. R.**—England and Wales contain 53,335 square miles.

**W. MORPETH** says he is growing old (twenty-seven), and has never yet been in love. This makes him melancholy—poor fellow! He has seen many ladies for whom he has experienced feelings of the deepest admiration and respect, but nothing that he recognizes as the overwhelming passion poets and others describe, in such glowing terms, as love. He is afraid to marry without marrying a woman he loves, and he begins to fancy that, despite his desire for matrimonial joys, that terrible fear is likely to keep him single all his life; and so he asks us, in real serious earnestness, if there is actually such a thing as love? or is the thing so called, as he says, "a mere compound of whims and fancies, with which the young and foolish mislead themselves and others." We advise him to discover some young, pretty, and amiable young lady, who will discuss the question with him in a logical and earnestly argumentative spirit. We think he might in that way find his queries answered more fully than we could answer them in this column.

**D. S.**—An account of the introduction of Flemish clothiers into England will be found in Fuller's Church History, originally published in 1655.

**A. MAKER.**—The ancient palatry is nearly the same instrument as the dulcimer.

**AMATEUR.**—If you use deal for the purpose, exercise care in planing it; for, when attention is not given to the way in which the grain runs, the plane, opposing it, dies up rough pieces, instead of removing smooth, flat shavings.

**SICK.**—Cod-liver oil is sometimes applied externally, and often with excellent effect.

**L. SALMON.**—The Virginian creeper is a native of North America.

## PUZZLES.

## ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

LXXVIII.

Can-ada.

LXXIX.

1.	2.
GARACAL	REPRINT
TUNIS	GOOSE
AGE	ASA
E	A
ELM	OBI
BOIAK	IRENE
PUCCOON	TRELLIS

LXXX.

ANACONDA  
MUSHROOM  
ORATORIO  
ROADSTER  
ASSIENTO  
DARKNESS  
ORATORIO

LXXXI.

Silver, Liver.

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